

THE CURSE OF THE CRIMSON PIRATE

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PLOT SUMMARY

The people of Halpstadt live in fear. A few weeks ago the ghost of Valamir the Crimson, an evil pirate burned in the village many years ago, returned and began haunting the lands around the village. However when the PCs investigate they will find that the haunting never really took place, it was all a trick designed by the local landlords to keep the villagers from investigating a slaver band operating in the area.

GM'S INTRODUCTION

The following adventure is designed to be fitted in to most campaigns, of any level of PC. The adventure is set in the village of Halpstadt which for the purpose of this write up is located in the Empire not far from Altdorf. However it is simple for the GM to set the adventure in villages elsewhere in the Empire and the wider Old World with a few simple changes to place names.

The style of the adventure is gothic horror. The sun shines weakly in the clouded sky, at night Morrslieb grins down at the PCs. Villagers huddle in their homes scared of ghostly happenings. In the forests strange sounds echo through the trees. The GM is encouraged to add as much gothic detail as he can to enhance the dark mood of the adventure.

Generally PCs will be travelling by road. The PCs enter Halpstadt in the evening, making is impractical to travel any further or be forced to travel through the night. The adventure therefore begins when the PCs decide to stay in the village.

Halpstadt

Population: Approx 150

Location: A few days north-East of Altdorf.

Surrounding area: Halpstadt sits in the Drakwald, close to Altdorf.. Around the village the few fields give way to the forest. To the north the land becomes more hilly and rocky.

Trades: Most of Halpstadt has little to offer an adventurer. There is no blacksmith or general trader. The few shops all are used to sell food to the other villagers. A few fields grow crops and hold livestock, and men fish from nearby streams. The only place to drink and stay in the village is the inn, The Burning Man.

Buildings: Around 40, mostly houses with a few shops and an inn. A few farm buildings are scatted around. Half the buildings in the village are run down with broken roofs, rotting wood and other signs of being poorly maintained. Easily notable in the village is a two-story mansion, larger than any other building in Halpstadt, though it is also in similarly bad shape. This is owned by the Stotter brothers who own a lot of the land and buildings in and around the village.

Religion: There is a shrine to Sigmar in the centre of the village but no temples or priests.

Government: No-one is formally in charge of Halpstadt, the village has no Mayor or leader. Any matters of law are settled by travelling judges or priests.

Healing: Frida, one of the elder women in the village is willing to offer healing to travellers for a few coins (treat this as Int 35 with Heal (+10%), and access to Healing Poultices for 1 silver)

ARRIVAL

Halpstadt is very quiet as the PCs enter. A few locals are around, but most seem to be moving rapidly to their homes, glancing around fearfully. A few pause as they catch sight of the PCs, but then hurry on after a second. The village seems fairly run down. Quite a few of the buildings are in various states of disrepair, and one small home appears to have collapsed completely. Many of those that are in better shape also have planks of wood nailed over the windows. Most have symbols scratched or painted on their doors.

An easy (+20%) Common Knowledge (Empire or Religion) can be made. Those that pass identify the symbols as Sigmarite marks, which are painted on doors to ward off evil.

At this point, if the PCs try talking to the villagers anyone they approach quickly disappears into their home and shuts the door. Attempts at talk are quickly rebutted.

The PCs will be looking for somewhere to stay, and will easily come across the village inn at the centre of the village. Lights shine from frosted windows but it sounds fairly quiet inside. A sign above the doorway creaks in the wind, the image upon it of a man being burned at the stake. Beneath this image, in peeling paint, are the words 'The Burning Man'.

Upon opening the door all talk and movement

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inside the inn cease. If the PCs enter the few men inside appear to be frozen, staring at the doorway with fear on their faces. Then they seem relieved, and go back to hushed conversations or their drinks. A tall, gaunt looking man nods at the PCs from behind the bar.

THE BURNING MAN INN

The Burning Man is run by Heinrich Kohl and his wife Rosemary and is also staffed by their 13 year old son Hans. Heinrich is a tall, thin man who mans the bar whilst the plumper Rosemary cooks in the kitchen and sots out the rooms above. Hans helps out his mother and also tends to horses and the stables around back. The Inn is named after the famous burning of the pirate Valamir the Crimson in the village (though Heinrich initially will not reveal this if asked).

The inn has a common room which can be slept in for 4p per night per person, and two small, currently empty, private rooms which can each fit one person for 5s for the night. Lodging is of average quality. If the PCs need horses stabled then this will cost 2p per horse, and Heinrich will despatch his son Hans. The Burning Man mostly sells local ale for 2p per pint but also has a handful of wines and spirits for 2s per bottle. A tasty rabbit pie is on offer for dinner for 3p breakfast of bread and cheese is 1p. If any cooking is to be done Heinrich will shout to Rosemary in the kitchen.

Currently few people in the village like to be out late so the inn is fairly empty. Heinrich will therefore be as accommodating as he can to the PCs if only to get some pennies off them.

If asked about why the bar is empty, or where the people look so afraid Heinrich will clam up and mutter that he 'ain't seen nothing'. Others have seen things, but not him. He will gesture to the inn's current patrons as though the PCs should ask them.

THE RUMOURS

The inn patrons, all local villagers, are initially unwilling to discuss what they have seen. They will try and change the subject very quickly to the horrible weather they're having or other such small talk. A hard (-20%) fellowship test is required. Each level of charm or gossip (use the highest) that a character holds adds +10%. Each drink that a PC buys for a particular villager adds

+10%, to a maximum of 2 drinks per villager (too many more than that just gets them drunk).

Once a test has been passed the villager questioned will down his pint slam it on the table and announce in a despairing voice. "The Crimson Pirate has returned, and he's here to take our souls!"

Once this announcement is made it is though a flood gate has been opened and all the other inn patrons become willing to talk, and most of them want to make sure what they know is heard. Therefore once the PCs ask the villager who made the announcement for more information the others will all join in with various comments. In addition should the PCs mention the Crimson Pirate to any other villagers they will immediately have a comment on the subject, even the previously quiet Heinrich.

The trouble for the PCs is that whilst every man in the villager has a grasp of the very basics of what is happening and how it relates to events that happened many years ago they do not know all the facts and are all taken with adding wild exaggerations and embellishments to the tale. As no villagers were alive when the events in question happened none are in full possession of the facts. All villagers know the following (which is true):

"Seventy years ago a dreaded pirate known as Valamir the Crimson sailed up river with his murderous crew and found himself deep in the heart of the Empire. He came across Halpstadt and terrorised us! When the witch hunters caught and burned him he cursed our village, claiming he would return to claim our souls for his evil god. Now his ghost has been seen stalking the fields. Two of our folk have disappeared already and now we all live in fear."

In addition most villagers will know a few other facts, which they will tell the PCs if they ask. The ghost was first seen two weeks ago, and since then has been spotted most nights. It only appears at night, and currently has not been seen in the villager itself only the surrounding fields and hills.

The two villagers missing are Cedrid, a woodcutter and Orwin Steiner, a farmer. Both went missing last week.

Most people are now too scared to be out their homes after dark.

One of the patrons in the inn, and a number of other people round the village will have actually

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seen the ghost (at a distance). They will describe it along the following lines:

“Terrifying it was to look at! It seemed to shimmer with a dark red aura as it stalked through the field. Bigger than a normal man, it swung a vicious cutlass through the air. When it turned its head to look at me its eyes burned with fire. I could not stand to be in its evil presence and fled, not looking back. I’ve never seen anything so frightening.”

However in addition to the facts each villager has a number of other thoughts on the matter. Some are true, some are embellishments to make the story sound for more frightening and some are just wild figments of the villagers’ imaginations. Select these from the list below as appropriate (or make up some wild rumours of your own).

“Valamir and his crew hid out in an old mine, somewhere north of here. That’s where they hid their treasure. I reckon someone’s disturbed the mine, and that’s why the Crimson Pirate walks the lands again.”

“His crew used to capture villagers and use them in blasphemous rituals for a dark god! He took ‘em into the hills but you could still hear the screams from the village.”

“He had knives instead of fingers. Cut up a man as soon as look at him.”

“When a murderous thug joined Valamir’s crew he would eat one of their eyeballs. Gave him magical powers.”

“Valamir was known as the Scourge of the Sea of Claws. It was there that he used to terrorise traders. He would attack ships just for the joy of killing.”

“The Crimson Pirate he was called, ‘cause fresh red blood constantly dripped from his jaws.”

“He filed his teeth to points and would bite into a man and taste his blood. All in the name of an evil god.”

“His dark god gave him evil powers. He could stare at a man and make his blood boil. He could command swarms of rats to attack and devour men.”

“When the witch hunters caught him and burned him the smoke turned crimson, and those watching were filled with horrible visions of murder and death. It’s said a few of them went mad after watching that.”

“The pirate’s been sent by Sigmar to punish us for our sins! Woe is Halpstadt. Woe is us that have angered the gods so.”

Of course should the PCs ask if any of the rumour mongers were alive at the time they will say no, but they heard it from their cousin’s friend’s father who was around then. If ask if anyone in the village was actually alive one NPC will mention Old Jeb Baer.

JEB BAER’S TALE

Any villager can point out in which house the Baer family live. Mathias Baer, a poultry farmer, lives with his old father Jeb and young daughter Herwig. Mathias lives in fear of the nights now Valamir’s ghost has been seen. He believes the ghost will come for his family, since his father is the only one still alive at the time of the pirate’s burning. When the PCs knock they will hear movement inside the house through the boarded up windows. After a few seconds will come a muffled cry of “Who’s there?” After the PCs persuade a frightened Mathias that they are not ghostly pirates they will hear the sound of heavy bars being moved from behind the door. A nervous looking man will open the door and usher the PCs quickly in, before quickly slamming the door and throwing the bars back down.

The Baers live in a small two room house. In the main room old Jeb Baer sits in a rocking chair, young Herwig playing with a doll at his feet. Jeb will take little persuading to relate his story. Mathias looks nervous throughout, as though talking about Valamir will attract the pirate’s attention. Hedwig meanwhile is rapt and wide eyed.

“Seventy years ago, it was, when the dread pirate Valamir the Crimson, Scourge of the Sea of Claws, sailed up river with his crew into the Empire. Escaping pursuing witch hunters they came upon our quiet village. They terrorised us for a month, stealing away men, women and children and taking them up into the hills. Sold his soul to a dark god, they say, and the prisoners were used in horrifying rituals. We hid in our homes and hoped the pirates wouldn’t claim us.

Finally the witch hunters caught up with him and dragged Valamir and his crew into the square. The crew were hung on makeshift gibbets but Valamir was tied to a stake. I was but a boy then but I still remember the wicked grin on his face as the men piled wood beneath him. As the fire started he laughed loud and roared a curse at the

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crowd, that he would return to claim us.

And now he is back.”

If asked for any further details, old Jeb will try and recollect anything that may be useful. He will recall the following:

“The pirates hid out in an old silver mine, to the north, north-east of here. It was there that they took back those they captured, used them in terrifying rituals. Sometimes you could hear the screams at night. It also where they kept their treasure, a great fortune they brought with them. Many years after Valamir was burned, when I was a teenager, a few of the villagers went to the mine in search of the treasure. None of them returned.”

Jeb has nothing more to say to the PCs that could be useful. He will deny most of the villagers' wilder tales, such as Valamir having daggers for fingers, commanding swarms of rats or constantly dripping blood. Still he will make sure the PCs realise that the pirate was still an intently evil man who found enjoyment in murder, rape and pillage.

When they leave the Baer home they can hear the sound of a heavy bar securing the door behind them.

OTHER LEADS

The PCs may wish to search the areas where the pirate was seen. These areas are in the fields and forest edge to the north and east of Halpstadt. Have them make search or follow trail rolls, but there is nothing to find. The ghost leaves no footprints or any other trace. If you wish to delay the PCs have them find tracks a few days old leading in and out of the woods which they can follow for five minutes before reaching a small clearing of chopped trees. This is simply an area used for chopping up firewood, nothing supernatural.

The PCs may inquire further about the missing villagers, Cedrid and Orwin. Cedrid was a woodcutter with no family who lived in a small shack on the edge of the forest. He often wandered into the woods, but has not returned for over a week which is unusual for him. A search of his shack reveals nothing except for a mattress, an axe and a few eating utensils.

Orwin Steiner was married to the now distraught Elsa Steiner. She weeps and begs for the PCs to find her husband. She offers no clues other than

to say her husband chased a runaway pig into the woods five days ago and was never seen again.

Once the PCs have exhausted any other leads they should try and find the mine where Valamir and his pirates were based. If the PCs are not picking up on this lead make sure gossiping villagers mention the mine and their theory that the mine must have been disturbed and Valamir's ghost is angry.

THE MINE

The PCs can get directions to the mine from Jeb or any other villager. A successful routine (+10%) Follow Trail or Outdoor Survival test means the journey takes 30 minutes. Failure means the journey takes an additional D10 x 5 minutes. If the PCs have decided to try and find the mine without any directions then it takes them D5 hours.

The entrance to the mine is in the side of a cliff face, in a quiet clearing in a forested area of the hills. Once the entrance was boarded up, but now the planks have rotted away. Rails, on which once a mine cart would have moved, run out the entrance rusted and overgrown. No noise comes from the entrance other than the occasional drip of water. Peering inside, all the PCs can see is darkness.

If the PCs decide to check the clearing for any tracks a straightforward (+10%) follow trail test is required. If successful tracks can be found in the mud, human footprints a few days old entering into the mine, though none come out the entrance. Attempts to follow the footprints back are unsuccessful after a minute of following, the trail lost on an area of rocky ground. The footprints belong to Ferdinand Viermann, who belongs to a group of local slavers. He heard that treasure was to be found in the mine and sought it out. Using his quick wits he managed to make it deep into the mine, but not all the way to the treasure.

See the illustration on the following page for the mine layout. The following paragraphs refer to the lettered areas on the mine.

GMs Notes: Deep into the mine is where Valamir performed vile rituals to Khaine, god of murder. The tunnel network became seeped in evil magic, and this still lingers today. The PCs will hear faint screams and whispering, have flashes of horrific images of death and see shadowy figures out of

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the corners of their eyes. The GM should drop such strange happenings into the adventure as much as he feels is required.

In fact the dark energies of the mine play upon the minds of the PCs, magnifying their fear. Whenever a PC fails a test due to seeing a frightening sight (such as the skeleton pirates) then they will attempt to back away. Every round thereafter they must make a WP test or continue to back away from the source. If this results in the PC being alone (the definition of which is up to the GMs discretion) then they must continue their WP tests each round as strange sounds, screams and whispers seem to close in around them. A failed test results in an insanity point. The character will stop hearing the noises as soon as a test is passed or another PC comes to help them.

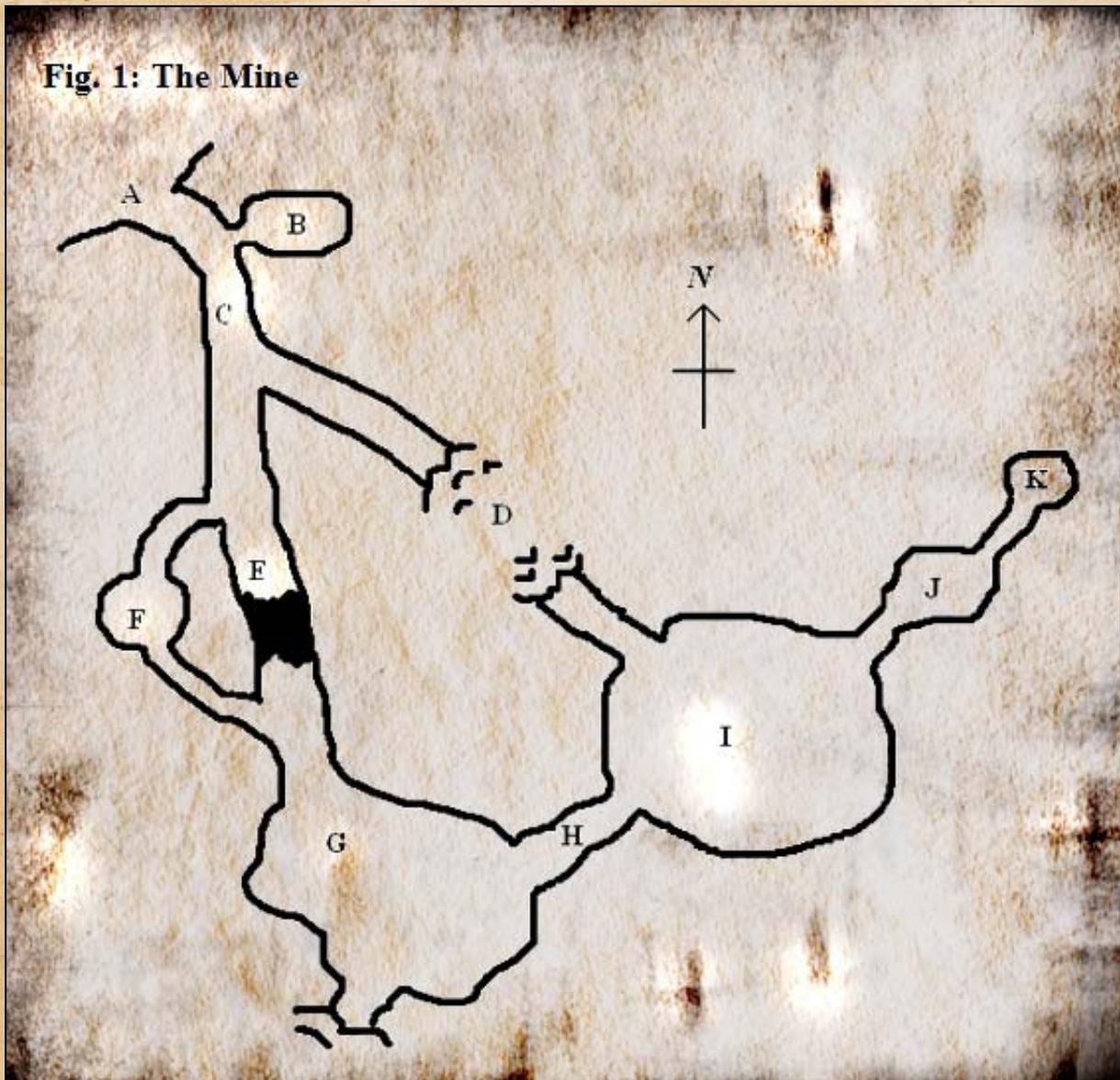
In addition so fused is the mine with dark magic

that it has an affect on spellcasting. Any spells cast whilst inside the mine will suffer automatic failure if all the D10s rolled on a Casting Roll are 1 and/or 2 (rather than just all 1's). If this is the case the caster must make a WP test or gain an insanity point.

Also note that a lot of tests are required in the mine, from leaping over pits to avoiding the touch of ghosts. If a PC comes up with a good idea to help him (or a particularly bad one to hinder him) the GM should apply modifiers as he sees fit.

A - As the PCs enter the mine they are hit by a sudden wave of emotion. Their heads are filled with visions of blood and thoughts of murder. Each PC must make a Will Power test. Any that fail are so shaken by the images that they are at a -5% to all tests for the remainder of their time in the mine. In addition each PC who failed must make another Will Power test when they enter

Fig. 1: The Mine



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Valamir's sacrifice chamber (Room I). If they fail this test as well they receive 1 Insanity Point.

The mine tunnel slopes downwards. No light sources are around, and it seems almost that the PCs torches don't penetrate the darkness as far as they should. The cart rails run on into the oppressive darkness.

B - The side chamber was once used by the mine foremen in charge of operations, now the tables and chairs are nothing more than piles of rotted wood and the chamber is full of bats. However these bats have been roosting in the mine for so long they have been affected by the presence of evil and now hunger for blood. When the PCs enter the bats will attack, swirling around the PCs attempting to bite them.

Each PC has 10 bats attacking them, though the GM shouldn't inform the players of this exact number, only that they are being swarmed. Each round each PC being attacked must make a WS test to bat the bats away. If they are successful they get rid of D10 bats around them. At the end of each round each PC with bats around them has a 10% chance multiplied by the number of bats around them of losing 1 wound from bat bites (no modifiers for toughness or armour). (e.g. a PC with 6 bats attacking them has a 60% chance of losing 1 wound). A PC with no bats around them at the start of the round may make a WS test to get rid of D10 bats from another PC.

The PCs may come up with other ways of dealing with the bats, the effects of which are up to the GM to decide. The swarm is very distracting and any complex actions, such as casting a spell, would certainly be at a penalty.

Once the bats have been dealt with the PCs may search the chamber. It contains nothing but rotting wood and the skeletons of a previous bat victim, a traveller who used the mine for shelter from a storm over ten years ago. On the body are 4 shillings, a rusty dagger and a silver ring (worth 1 gold).

C - As the tunnel continues to slope down into the darkness the PCs happen upon two skeletons, each with their heads detached from their bodies. The floor in front of them is trapped with a pressure pad. If the PCs search the area they can find the pad on a successful challenging (-10%) search test. Once spotted, the pressure pad can easily be stepped over (though it is up to the PCs to step over it on their way back out the mine!).

Should a PC trigger the trap an axe blade swings from the side of the tunnel through and hidden

hole and is aimed straight at their head. The PCs may make a very hard (-30%) Dodge Blow test to avoid the strike, otherwise this is treated as a strength 6 hit to the head. If the PC is smaller than 5' 3" the blade sails harmlessly over their head. The trap resets itself automatically afterwards.

The skeletons have been here a long time, and have nothing of value on them.

Moving on further down the tunnel splits into two, the tracks splitting in each direction.

D - Whilst once this tunnel was used by the miners it has since collapsed. A character with Trade (Miner) who passes an easy (+20%) intelligence test can tell this happened some time ago and would be impossible to remove without weeks of work. There is no way past.

E - The tunnel suddenly plunges into a deep pit. It seems the floor has collapsed, 6 yards into the earth below. Raising their light sources the PCs can see the hole is just over 4 yards across. PCs may wish to use rope however there is nothing to attach it to on the other side.

PCs can attempt to jump the gap. Follow the rules for jumping and falling in the WFRP rulebook. Although the gap is just over 4 yards wide, across the other side of the gap the ground is unstable for a yard. If the PC's jump take them only 1-4 yards then they fall 6 yards into the hole. If the jump takes them 5 yards then as they land on the loose rock on the other side it collapses. The PC must pass an Ag test to scramble forwards onto more secure footing, otherwise they fall with the collapsing rock. The hole is now just over 5 yards wide. Any jumps of 6 yards or more makes it safely over the hole.

Nothing of interest is in the hole, though any PC down there will have to get out somehow. This can be done using scale sheer surface skill tests, or any other method the PCs devise.

F - The tunnel widens into a small chamber. In the centre three skeletons sit on stools at a low stone table playing some sort of card game, a few silver pieces lie on the table next to some tattered cards. A rusted cutlass lies next to each skeleton. The closest stool (to the PCs) is empty.

The skeletons are pirates told to guard the mines a long time ago, before Valamir was captured. Long after the mine was boarded up still they sat until they starved. But the strange ritual magic coursing through the mine kept the pirates in a state of undeath and now they sit, eternally

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playing their card game unless they are disturbed.

Should the PCs attempt to pass by the pirates in the room, attack the corpses, take the silver coins or in any other way interfere with them the pirate skeletons will attack the PCs. See later for their stats. Once the PCs have defeated the pirates they can search the room. The only things of value are 15 silver pieces.

Should a PC sit at the chair one of the pirates will take the mouldy deck and deal out six cards to each player, including the PC. He then cuts the deck into three and places it in the centre. Each skeleton in turn places 5 silver pieces in the centre of the table and turns to look at the PC. A successful easy (+20%) Gamble or a Common Knowledge (The Empire) test will identify the game as 'Stromfel's Folly', a simple game played mostly in the northern states of the Empire. The basic rules will be familiar to anyone who passes this test.

If the PC wishes to play the game he can. If he declines and leaves his seat the skeletons rise and attack the PCs. To play the PC must put in 5 silver. The skeletons in turn draw cards and place cards back down again following the usual rules of the game. Assuming the PC knows how to play, or one of his companions helps him, the PC can continue the play. After a few rounds of playing cards the game is finished.

The PC playing, or whoever was helping him, may make a Gamble or a challenging (-10%) Intelligence test. If they are successful then the PC wins then the skeletons push their money his way, the PC can take the 15 silver pieces. Otherwise the PC loses and the winning skeleton takes all the silver at the table and piles it in front of him. After the game the skeletons continue playing, without dealing any of the PCs in. Either way the PCs can now pass freely through the room, though any further interference with the skeletons or their money will cause them to attack.

Note: If the PCs are particularly adept at combat then the GM may wish to add another one or two pirate skeletons at the table and/or increase their combat prowess.



G - The PC's enter a large cavern, obviously a main area of the mining operation. A smashed mine cart lies next to the cart tracks. Rusted tools scatter the ground. It looks like the exit south-west from this chamber is now blocked by a collapsed tunnel. A character with Trade (Miner) who passes an easy (+20%) intelligence test can tell this happened some time ago and would be impossible to remove without weeks of work.

H - As the PCs enter this tunnel they are suddenly stopped in their tracks. Ahead, out of the gloom, materialise ghostly apparitions. Men, women and children dressed in peasant garb, looks of terror upon their faces. These are the ghosts of those poor villagers sacrificed to Khaine by the Valamir and his crew. The spirits float down the corridor, fading away just short of where the PCs stand, at the end of the tunnel. The ghosts are frightening and PCs must make a fear test upon seeing them.

The ghosts constantly materialise randomly in the corridor, float a few metres then disappear. They do not directly attack or go towards the PCs. The ghosts cannot be harmed or destroyed, only avoided. When the PCs attempt to move through the tunnel of spirits they may decide to go cautiously or quickly. If they proceed cautiously they must pass two easy (+20%) Ag tests. If they go quickly they must pass one average Ag test. If any tests are failed the PC comes into contact

with a ghost, its chill touch arching through their body. They lose 1 wound automatically and must take a T test. If they fail they lose an additional wound and must make a T test again. This process repeats until the PC passes a T test or they reach 0 wounds, at which point they gain an insanity point and may stumble through the rest of the corridor without any further rolls needed.

I - This chamber is another large cavern where once seams of silver were sought from the rock. When Valamir took over the mine he used this place as his main sacrificial chamber. Here his prisoners from the

village were used in terrible rituals designed to appease his dark god. In the centre sits a circular dais around 3' high made of black marble. Upon it sits a small black marble statue of an ugly creature 2' high with four arms, each holding a dagger. An successful easy (+20%) Common Knowledge (Religion) test will reveal this to be

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Khaine, Lord of Murder. Arranged around the dais are a number of clay pots, their insides stained dark red (with blood).

If the PCs search the chamber and pass a Challenging (-20%) Search Test then they will find a small jade ring hidden behind a small pile of rocks, probably dropped and never noticed again. It is not magical but is worth 10 gc. The statuette of Khaine is very heavy (Enc 150) but can be taken. To the right collector it may be worth 100 gc or more, but finding someone willing to buy it without attracting suspicion and witch hunters is a different matter.

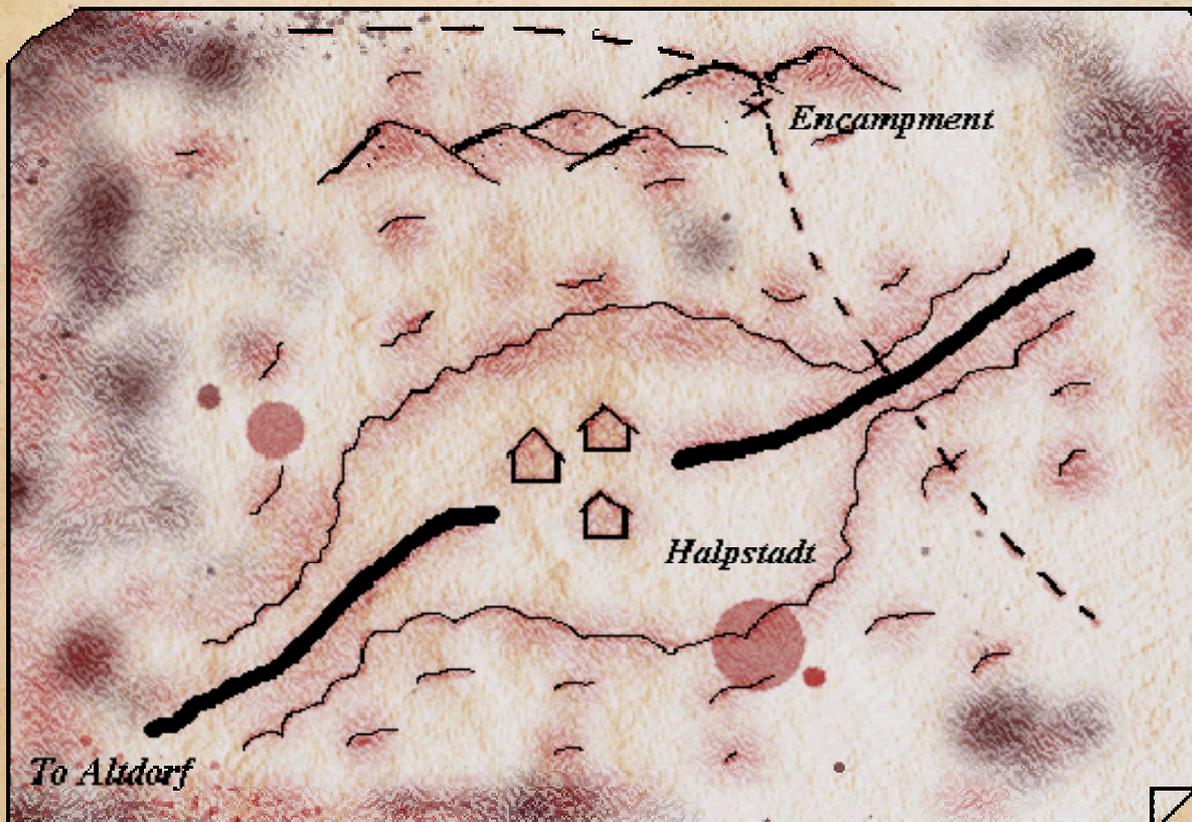
J - Inside this chamber lives a disgusting creature created by Valamir's evil rituals from parts of the captives he sacrificed. Four arms stitched onto a torso, the body and head mutilated. The hands have been replaced by rusty blades and the teeth by sharp nails. The abomination was created in Khaine's revolting image to guard the pirates' treasure. Having fed only occasionally on wandering treasure seekers the creature has lain dormant until a few days ago when Ferdinand Viermann disturbed its lair. Believing the creature was another statue Ferdinand let his guard down. With its last ounces of forgotten strength it attacked the unsuspecting Ferdinand and killed him, and began slowly to drink his blood. When the PCs arrive the abomination is still drinking from Ferdinand's body. The creature is facing

away from the entrance, so sneaky PCs may be able to sneak up on the creature with a successful silent move test. Otherwise it will notice them enter. It is not as strong as once it was, but the creature can still put up a fearsome fight. See later for its stats.

Once killed the PCs can investigate Ferdinand's body and his possessions. They will find a sword and a ruined leather jerkin (cut up by the abomination). Ferdinand also has a purse with 7 silver and a piece of paper inside. PCs may make a Easy (+20%) Search Test to notice that, hidden under his sleeve, Ferdinand wears a very thin amber bracelet. This is worth 2 gc.

The piece of paper unfolds into a small map of the surrounding area. It is fairly basic, showing Halpstadt, the roads and the surrounding hills and forests. Of interest is a dotted line travelling north to south and passing close to the east of Halpstadt. To the north east of the village, on the dotted line, is a cross with the words 'encampment' by it. The map leads to a cave where Ferdinand's slaver group are based. It is not far east of the mine. See below for the map.

Nothing else of interest lies in the bare chamber. Whilst a number of people have perished here the creature will have devoured every last bit of their body.



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K - This small chamber is half taken up by a large (closed) chest. It is made of metal, that looks corroded but the chest is still intact and inscribed runes can just be made out. A successful straightforward (+10%) Academic Knowledge (Runes) will reveal that the runes refer to the glory of Khaine. The chest is not locked though the lid is heavy. Opening the chest reveals its treasure, three gold coins. The coins appear to be old, though not worth any more than a usual gold piece. Whatever happened to Valamir's treasure hoard, it is not here.

The PCs may want to take the chest with them. It is heavy but they can manage it. Still the rusty metal chest is worth only a few copper, and if anyone else recognises the inscribed runes it may attract unwanted attention.

The PCs will now have to pass back out the mine. Remember they will still face any hazards and set off any traps they avoided on the way in.

The PCs will have to decide where to head next. They could go back to the village however they are no close to finding out about Valamir. No villagers, even old Jeb, will have any idea who could have taken the treasure. If the PCs visited the mine at night and return to talk to the villagers they will be told Valamir was seen again stalking out the woods to the north east only to fade as he reached the village. An investigation will show nothing.

The only other lead the PCs should have at this moment is the map found on the dead Ferdinand.

THE SLAVERS CAVE

The PCs can follow the map through the woods for just less than an hour from the mine, or twenty minutes more from the village. The PCs must make orientation skills rolls, if all fail then the journey takes an extra D10 x 5 minutes. After this time they arrive at the marked area. This is a cave in the side of a small cliff used by slavers who pass through the area at night. During the day the cave keeps the slavers and their captives before they move on again at night. Day or night, a guard always stands in the cave entrance. Peering through the trees the PCs will be able to see the guard, though they will have to get much closer if it is dark.

How the PCs decide to approach the entrance is up to them. Should they loudly rush in the guard will shout a warning to wake or attract the attention of the other slavers in the cave. If a fight

breaks out the slavers will initially rush in to attack however they are fairly cowardly, should one of their number fall in combat or things look grim the remaining slavers will attempt to surrender. The PCs may go for a more sneaky approach, the details of which are left up to them and the GM. They may also be able to talk there way into the situation, although the guard will be very suspicious of people he doesn't know.

The entrance goes into a short tunnel which opens up into a cave. Here is where the slavers sleep during the day. The room has a number of bedrolls on straw, a table and a few chairs. A crate holds a few supplies, other crates are empty. If it is daytime three slavers will be asleep here (though they will be woken by sounds of battle), including Johan Berg. If it is night the slavers will be awake, passing the time playing dice. Off the main room is a smaller room, separated by a locked wooden door. Through the holes in the door it can be seen that this is where captives are temporarily held. No captives are there when the PCs arrive.

The cave is a stopping point for a gang of slave traders. Refugees are taken from the streets of Altdorf, people who have no family to notice them missing. They are moved south-east through the forests, transferred from one group to another for each stage of the journey, each group referred to as a link in the slave chain. Generally only one or two of these slaves are taken at a time to make the process of moving them easier. Near Halpstadt, as the slave trail turns south, the slavers must pass the closest to civilisation along the chain. The slavers from the cave receive the prisoners then under the cover of night move them south, to be received by the next slaver group. The slavers in the area have no idea where the slaves end up, though the chain heads towards the Grey Mountains.

The head slaver in this group is Johan Weber. He can be identified as being better dressed and carrying a long whip. The other slavers are (cheap) hired muscle who know little about the slaving operation other than to do as they are told. Johan however knows why the slavers have set up in this area. When the slave chain was being formed those in charge reasoned that they could mostly move the captives through the wilderness, avoiding human interference. However at some points they would need to cross close to a village, otherwise the trail would be too long and expensive. The danger here was that moving slaves through the night so close to civilisation would draw attention.

The slavers made a deal with two landowners,

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the Stotter brothers, in the village of Halpstadt. In exchange for payment the brothers would ensure the villagers did not investigate the woods at night. Johan doesn't know how the Stotters went about this but so far the slavers have had little trouble in this area from the residents of Halpstadt. In fact only twice have people stumbled across the group; Cedrid and Orwin Steiner, the missing villagers. These were captured and sold into slavery and are now long gone.

If the slavers surrender Johan needs little persuasion to relate what he knows about the slaving operation. Should Johan be killed another slaver will be able to mention some brief details, including someone his boss referred to as 'Stotter'. If the bloodthirsty PCs have slaughtered all the slavers then they deserve to know nothing.

Should the PCs attempt to find either end of this link in the slave chain they can, however ultimately their searches will not be able to locate the other groups of slavers. A threatened slaver can lead them north for three hours to a clearing in the forest. South, and a few hours on, and the PCs end up in a secluded hollow in the hills. In either case this is as far as the slavers know the slaver train goes. Waiting around will reveal nothing, no other slavers come to investigate or meet the group.

RETURN TO HALPSTADT

Whether keeping the slavers alive or not the PCs will return to the village, maybe with captive slavers in tow. They will probably want to find out about the Stotter brothers if they have not heard of them already. Any villager will be able to tell them the following:

The Stotter brothers are William Stotter and his older brother Felix. Their father Hans Stotter had owned half the land in the village before leaving it to his sons after his death ten years ago. William has recently returned from a few years studying in Altdorf (though no-one knows what he studied). The Stotters are not particularly liked, they are poor landlords who have left the buildings in the village to rot and fall apart. They reside in the large mansion in the village. When the PCs ask any villagers they will tell them that they last saw William in the Burning Man drinking heavily.

Whether the PCs head to the Burning Man or the Stotter Mansion they will encounter Will Stotter first, either nursing a few pints in the inn, or staggering slightly worse for the wear to the

mansion doors. He is a little drunk and quite depressed. Should he see the slaver prisoners or when the PCs confront him he will let out a groan and slump down in his chair (or on his doorstep) and tell the PCs everything.

Thirty years after Valamir was burned in Halpstadt Hans Stotter, at that point a young shop keeper, heard the rumour of the treasure hidden in the mine. Secretly hiring a group of mercenaries in Altdorf to accompany him he entered the mine. The mercenaries all perished in the process but Hans managed to recover the pirate's treasure. Keeping what he had done secret, instead claiming he had been left some money by a rich uncle, he began slowly buying up various buildings and fields around Halpstadt. Ten years later he had the Stotter mansion constructed. But the riches went to Hans' head. Despite all the treasure and an income from renting out land Hans fortunes began to dwindle. He wasted it on drink, gambling and women in the expensive places of Altdorf. When he died over ten years ago he had very little left to pass on to his two young sons. However one of the last things he did was to pay for William to be educated at the College of Grey Magic in Altdorf, a final act of love from an otherwise neglecting father. So the brothers were left with a mansion and land in Halpstadt, and very little gold to go with it.

When he was old enough Will went to Altdorf to study magic, leaving Felix to look after affairs in Halpstadt. But like his father Felix squandered what income he had from land owning on drink and an addiction to Angel Dust. Felix wasted the little remaining Stotter fortune and left them penniless. Desperate for more gold he was approached by a group who wished to move slaves through the area, but they needed help keeping the villagers from finding out and were willing to pay for it. The penniless Felix readily agreed. Meanwhile Will had done poorly in his studies and left the Shadow College only a low level wizard. When he returned to Halpstadt Felix said he had a plan and needed Will's help, and the broke Will readily agreed.

Felix's plan was to play on the village's history. All of the villagers knew of the terrible curse Valamir the Crimson had uttered when he was burned here all those years ago. Will used his limited knowledge of illusionary magic to make it seem like the ghost of the pirate had returned, stalking the forests. Valamir had not actually returned, it was all a trick. The villagers would be so scared they would not leave their homes at night, and certainly not to venture into the forests at any time of day. No-one would come across the

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slavers as they transported their human cargo right next to the village. No-one would investigate the movements through the forests. And so the slavers would be kept safe and unnoticed and the Stotters would be paid a cut.

After relating the tale William will agree to accompany the PCs to see his brother Felix and tell him the game is up. Felix can be found in his mansion.

THE STOTTER MANSION

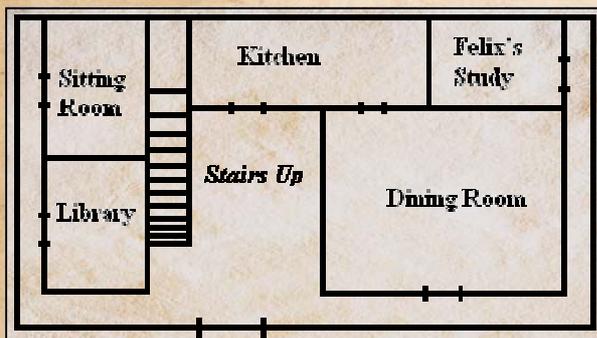
The mansion is dark and quiet, the Stotters unable to pay servants. It is sparsely furnished, many of the rooms bare as Felix sold his possessions. Dust covers bare surfaces and threadbare carpets. Here and there is a faded painting or a chipped vase. In case it is required, see below for a layout of the ground floors.

What is called the library now contains only empty shelves, the kitchen and dining room are mostly unused. The upstairs is a number of empty bedrooms, including servants quarters. The master bedroom is where Felix sleeps, William takes a smaller room, both contain the brothers' meagre possessions. Should PCs try looking for valuables to pinch they can probably scrape together 30 gold crowns worth of bits and bobs (plus a magical dagger, see later), though robbing houses should not be encouraged.

William will lead the PCs to Felix's darkened study, when Felix sits silently behind a desk. He looks pale, his eyes wide and fearful. He barely listens or responds to what the PCs may say. Instead he says, quivering:

"Brother, what have we done? He has fed on the fear we have created, the dread we have put in men's hearts. Valamir has fed and been summoned. He is back for us Will. He is back for our souls."

At this point the group hear what sounds like a rattle of chains from somewhere in the mansion.



Felix is correct. By putting the fear of Valamir back into the villagers they have called the pirate back from the realm of his patron god, Khaine. The Lord of Murder has allowed Valamir's spirit back to the earthly plain to claim the souls of those who summoned him, William and Felix Stotter.

What the PCs decide to do now is up to them. They could leave the brothers to their fate, after all it is the Stotters who summoned back Valamir and the Stotters who have been in league with the slavers. Should the PCs decide to leave the brothers they will beg the PCs for help. The PCs can if they wish make their way to the front door, avoiding Valamir's ghost. If they do not help, or if they just fail to do so, Valamir's ghost will attack the brothers and kill them in a bloodthirsty manner, after which he will vanish never to return. The screams of the brothers as the PCs leave them will haunt the villagers for a long while to come.

Should the PCs decide to stay and fight the ghost use the profile given later. If the PCs wait for the ghost to arrive he will enter the study, otherwise if they leave the room he will appear in the main hallway.

Note that the ghost is immune to non-magical attacks. Should the PCs mention this Will or Felix will remember that they still have a runic dagger that their father took from Valamir's treasure. The dagger however is in the sitting room, which means the PCs will have to pass the ghost.

Runic Dagger

Academic Knowledge: Runes

Powers: This magical dagger inflicts SB-1 damage in combat and is Precise

History: This dagger was created by Dwarven Runesmiths of Karak-Ungor and presented as a gift when establishing trading relations with the Empire. The dagger ended up in the hands of a merchant captain who was killed by the Crimson Pirate on the sea of claws.

Worth: Approximately 15 gc.

Will may try and help the PCs, though is at -20% Willpower to pass any fear tests caused by Valamir's ghost. Alternatively if the GM thinks the PCs are in trouble Will can overcome is fear and help them, but if the PCs are doing well then Will can stay cowering in fear. Felix wont help, he will cringe behind his desk at sight of the ghost.

THE AFTERMATH

If the PC's left Valamir to kill the Stotters then the villagers will have gathered outside the mansion after hearing the brothers' screams. Even after the situation is explained to them they will seem nervous and shy away from the PCs. They will seem a bit concerned that the PCs let the brothers die. Even though the villagers talked little to the brothers, and if matters are explained they will feel angry at the Stotters, they still feel upset at the outcome of events. Still, Valamir's ghost is gone for the mean time.

Assuming however that the PCs stopped Valamir's ghost the brothers have a lot of grovelling to do. Will is particularly apologetic, Felix is very quiet and still looks frightened. The brothers offer little material rewards as an apology, though William will try and give them the last remnants of Valamir's treasure (the Runic Dagger and a gem worth 4 gold) claiming the money has cursed the Stotter family. He will also state his intention to leave Halpstadt and not return. The next day the brothers will leave and make their way to Altdorf where Will hopes he can find somewhere to stay using his connections at the College of Shadow Magic.

Explaining what has happened to the villagers causes puzzlement, and many will still be frightened. Those who are most grateful have little to offer, but will give the PCs what they can if asked (mostly food but they may also be able to offer low complexity goods like rope or blankets). The villagers will be angry at the Stotters for causing such fear in them. Whilst they will not take any actual violent action they will be more than pleased when the Stotters leave.

If the PCs have captured slavers the grateful villagers will offer to watch over them until the next Imperial patrol passes through. The village itself has no formal justice system, instead the law and punishment is handed out by travelling judges or soldiers of the Empire. The PCs may decide to take the slavers to Altdorf themselves, which is also fine, the slavers can be handed over to the city watch at the gates.

EXPERIENCE

The following are suggestions as to the Experience a GM may award his players (as with everything else, feel free to change these to suit your campaign style):

Completing the adventure -	75 exp
Good roleplaying -	Up to 50 exp
Hearing Old Jeb's tale	5 exp
Not setting off any traps in the mine -	5 exp
Winning at 'Stromfel's Folly' -	5 exp
Capturing (not killing) the slavers -	10 exp
Killing Valamir's ghost -	10 exp

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

The Curse of the Crimson Pirate has been given a generic setting, a village in the woods, so that it can easily be fitted into any campaign. Though Halpstadt has been detailed as being close to Altdorf there is no reason this adventure cannot be run elsewhere in the Empire or even Kislev, Tilea or any other settled land.

If you need a hook for the adventure the PCs may have been sent to investigate the haunting. Who sends them will depend on your campaign. For instance this could be the church of Sigmar in Altdorf who have been asked for aid by the villagers.

EXPANDING THE ADVENTURE

Whilst this adventure has been written as a single scenario to drop into a campaign there are a number of options for GMs wanting to expand on what is presented here.

The obvious point for expansion here is based on the slave chain. The slavers in this adventure are only one link in a trail leading from Altdorf to the Grey Mountains. Whilst the PCs will have cut this chain the slavers are certain to find another way to get the slaves to where they want them. Especially if the chain is worth as much money as the complex set up suggests.

If you wish to provide further links Johan can tell the PCs a few hints, perhaps he overheard a name of someone in Altdorf. If the PCs were travelling to Altdorf this can give them something to investigate when they arrive. Alternatively they might try following the slaves chain to its other end to find what dastardly purposes the slaves are being put to. Are Skaven putting them to work

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mining for warpstone, or are they being used in sinister experiments by an evil sorcerer?

Another option could be that when the PCs investigate the slavers' cave they find a prisoner locked up. Maybe this was someone important in Altdorf. The man now owes the PCs his life and may be a starting point for future adventures or help investigating the slavers.

Another option involves the Crimson Pirate and his crew. Though his chest of treasure was squandered by Hans Stotter the pirates must have had far more booty than one chest could hold. As a recompense to show how sorry he is for his actions, Felix Stotter could give the PCs a map that his father took from Valamir's treasure chest. It refers to an island just off the coast of the Sea of Claws and an X marks the spot.

If the PCs fought and banished Valamir's ghost then they may have made a dangerous enemy. Khaine may be angered at the defeat of one of his chosen and at some time in the future will attempt to enact his revenge. Maybe Valamir is angered that he has been bested in combat and begs his dark lord for another opportunity to return to the mortal realm.

FINAL NOTES

Thanks to my play testers; Ian White, John Harris, Simon Canham, Duncan Railton and Tim Longdon and input from Rich Pingree.

Enjoy the adventure!

APPENDIX I: NPCs

List of NPCs:

Villagers:

Heinrich Kohl, inn keeper of the Burning Man with his wife **Rosemay** and son **Hans**.

Cedrid, missing woodcutter.

Orwin Steiner, missing farmer, and his wife **Elsa**.

Old Jeb Baer, his son **Mathias** and granddaughter **Herwig**.

Freda, village healer.

Felix Sotter, local landowner, and his brother

William, a secret grey wizard.

Slavers:

Johan Weber, in charge of the slaver band.

Ferdinand, inquisitive slaver eaten by the abomination.

Evil things:

Valamir the Crimson, Scourge of the Sea of Claws, devoted of Khaine.

The Abomination, stitched together to guard the treasure.

Skeleton Pirates, playing cards and waiting for a fight.

Villager

Should need arise, the following stats represent a typical villager such as Heinrich Kohl, the innkeeper at The Burning Man.

WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
25%	25%	31%	31%	32%	31%	30%	35%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	3	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire), Gossip, Speak Language (Reikspiel).

Skeleton Pirate

Kept alive by the strange magic that permeates the mine these skeletons sit and wait, either to attack those who wish to pass or play someone who wishes to join their game. Dressed in mouldy rags and tattered leather the pirates wield rusty toothed cutlasses which bite into their victim's skin.

WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
33%	20%	30%	30%	27%	-	-	-
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	3	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: None.

Talents: Frightening, Undead.

Special Rules: Mindless, Shambling (see the WFRP rulebook for Skeletons).

Armour: Leather Jerkin (Body 1 AP).

Weapons: Rusty Cutlass - Treat this as a normal hand weapon, however should one or more wound be inflicted on a character then they take two additional damage. If a PC takes one of these cutlasses then it will collapse into rust when they try to wield it.

The Abomination

Stitched together from mutilated body parts during horrific rituals, the creature in the mine was created in the image of Khaine, the Lord of Murder to guard Valamir's treasure. Four arms

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ending in rusted daggers lash out and spike teeth attempt to slice into enemy flesh. Having laid dormant for decades it is in a weakened state but is still a tough opponent.

WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
41%	-	54%	68%	32%	-	32%	-
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	17	4	6	4	0	0	0

Skills: None.

Talents: Frightening, Resistance to Magic.

Special Rules: Any fire based attacks do an additional 2 damage against the oily skin of the abomination.

Armour: None.

Weapons: The abomination's strikes with daggers where its hands should be, and attempts to bite opponents with its fearsome jaws. These are treated as normal attacks doing usual SB damage, each with the Fast property.

Slaver

Hired swords employed to watch over prisoners and keep them in line, the slavers are not employed to think.

WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
35%	40%	35%	40%	32%	28%	31%	28%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	13	3	4	4	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (The Empire), Concealment, Dodge Blow, Gamble, Gossip, Intimidate, Perception, Speak Language (Reikspiel).

Talents: Disarm, Street Fighting, Strike to Stun.

Armour: Leather Shirt and Cap (Body, Arms and Head 1 point).

Weapons: Sword, Shield.

Possessions: 2 silver pieces.

Johan Weber

The leader of the slaver band near Halpstadt. Whilst the other slavers are just hired swords Johan has some knowledge of the slaving operation. He dresses a bit finer than his men, with a number of trinkets taken from his captives.

WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
40%	35%	32%	37%	38%	35%	35%	36%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	3	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (The Empire), Concealment, Dodge Blow, Gamble, Gossip, Intimidate, Perception, Speak Language

(Reikspiel).

Talents: Disarm, Street Fighting, Strike to Stun

Armour: (Body, Arms and Head 1 point).

Weapons: Whip, Sword.

Possessions: 10 silver pieces.

William Stotter, Grey Mage

The tall, gangly Will Stotter recently returned to Halpstadt after a period of study at the College of Shadow Magic in Altdorf. He looks permanently worried as if a great matter weighs heavily upon him. He wears decent quality clothes, though not the robes as wizard would normally be adorned in.

WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
33%	29%	27%	38%	43%	51%	50%	37%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	2	3	4	2	3	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Magic), Channelling, Common Knowledge (The Empire), Magical Sense, Perception, Read/Write, Search, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (Classical), Speak Language (Reikspiel), Swim.

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Arcane Law (Shadow), Petty Magic (Arcane), Savvy.

Armour: None.

Weapons: None.

Special Rules: In addition to the usual Lore of Shadow spell list Will knows the following spell he found in a dusty tome in the College.

Craft Illusionary Figure

Casting Number: 12

Casting Time: Full Action

Ingredient: A crude carved wooden man (+2)

Description: You can create the illusion of a humanoid figure up to 24 Yards (12 Squares) away. The figure can be any living creature you want that is of the approximate size. If you wish the figure can be created to cause Fear however the spell is not powerful enough to make a figure cause terror. You control the figures actions. The figure makes no noise, nor can it touch anything. You must continue to concentrate on the figure each round, taking up all your actions. Should you be disturbed or stop concentrating the illusion ends. Otherwise the illusion lasts a number of rounds equal to your magic characteristic but you may keep it going beyond this by passing a Will Power Test at the start of each subsequent round.

Felix Stotter

Until recently a roguish rake Felix's lifestyle has plunged him into a financial crisis, now he sits

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and brood in his cold mansion. The signs of drink and drugs still show on his pale face. He wears faded velvet clothes, showing that once he was rich and, in his mind, important.

WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
37%	32%	31%	32%	45%	43%	16%	43%
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	13	3	3	4	0	1	0

weapons, arrows etc. seem to pass straight through him. However normal weapons can still parry his blades. Valamir turns substantial just before he hits. If a clever player thinks of a cunning plan to take advantage of this the GM may decide to allow it, depending on how he sees the situation. For instance if the party does not have any magical attacks of their own he could allow Ag tests to try and strike Valamir at the moment he turns solid.

Skills: Blather, Charm, Common Knowledge (The Empire), Evaluate, Gamble, Gossip, Perception, Search, Speak Language (Reikspiel).

Talents: Sixth Sense.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Sword or Dagger.

Special Rules: After letting his life sink so low, and realising the full horror of letting Valamir the Crimson's ghost return to try and take his soul, Felix's mind has collapsed. He is at -20% to his WP (this is shown on his profile).

Valamir's Ghost

A fearsome sight, the ghost of Valamir bears far less resemblance to the Crimson Pirate as he was when alive than what he has become in the villager's minds. Now he stands seven foot tall, with cutlass blades for fingers. Blood constantly dribbles from spiked teeth and fire licks from his black eyes. Severed chains hang from the frightening form.

WS	BS	S	T	AG	INT	WP	FEL
55%	-	54%	38%	52%	32%	86%	-
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	15	5	3	5	0	0	0

Skills: Dodge Blow, Silent Move,

Talents: Frightening, Strike Mighty Blow, Swashbuckler, Undead.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Valamir's Ghost has long rusty cutlass blades instead of fingers which he uses in combat, any wounds inflicted freeze his opponent's very soul. No penalties are given for not having an actual weapon. If a character takes one or more wound from Valamir's blades they must make a toughness test with a -5% penalty for each wound inflicted. If they pass no extra damage is taken. If they fail then the character takes an additional points of damage, plus one extra point for every full twenty points they failed by. If five additional damage is dealt this way in one hit then that character also gains an insanity point.

Special Rules: Valamir's Ghost does not take any damage from non-magical attacks. Normal