

WARHAMMER  
FANTASY  
ROLE-PLAY

# OLD WORLD ADVENTURES



◆ HELL RIDES TO HALLT ◆



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# HELL RIDES TO HALLT



*Only the damned and damnable fools ride out on Hexensnacht, as the turning of the year wakes the very dead, calling them up from unmarked graves and unballowed resting places. The priests of Morr alone are safe, their lonely vigil a solitary ward against the restless dead. So which are you — fool, damned soul, or lonesome priest — to set about so close to Hexensnacht, with rumour and more of a headless rider claiming grim trophies across the land?*

**Ubersreik Adventures: Hell Rides to Hallt** is a short scenario that can be played either as a stand-alone adventure or as the Characters travel throughout the Empire. The adventure begins either with the Characters arriving at the town of Hallt, at the behest of Litigant Goswin Samter, or with the Characters out late on the road to Hallt when they witness Goswin set upon by a headless horseman.

The scenario sees the Characters exploring and investigating the town of Hallt and its residents, on a quest to discover the dark secrets surrounding the headless horseman — the notorious ‘Dullahan’ — and the reason for his deadly attacks. Depending upon how the Characters act, they can prevent further deaths and learn the reason why the horseman is out for bloody vengeance. Remember to keep calm at all times and try not to lose your head, but should the party fail, feel free to let them lose theirs. It is Hexensnacht, after all...

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

On the ominous eve of Hexenstag, a long campaign of terror by a headless horseman approaches its bloody conclusion. While there are many legends of such horrors roaming the Empire, all carrying out terrifying campaigns of revenge and murder, the ‘Headless Horseman of Hallt’ has his own agenda. In fact, this horseman is no ghost or daemon, but a strange mutant who, at least until recently, possessed two heads — one on top of his neck, and other on his stomach.

The horseman was once Friedwart Hauptfehlt, a blacksmith from Hallt. Despite a hidden mutation that left Hauptfehlt with a second ‘head’ on his stomach, the man was as innocent as most citizens of the Empire. A relative newcomer to the town, he was a convenient scapegoat on which to pin the murder of

Ute Bott, a local priest, by a cult centered in Hallt. Decapitated of his less unusual head some months back, Hauptfehlt was presumed dead. So when his body disappeared, it only served as further evidence that the blacksmith must have been in league with some daemon or worse. The cult — the ostentatiously named Council of Vicissitude — who framed him remain in Hallt, the horseman’s decapitated head just one of several grim trophies that adorn the cult’s warren.

As the dark of Hexensnacht draws near, the Characters are on their way to the town of Hallt, and are attacked by the horseman. As a result, they are drawn into the conspiracy and lies that riddle the town of Hallt and the tale of the ‘Headless Horseman’. Can they stop the horseman’s bloody rampage? Or indeed, should they?

## GETTING STARTED

To play this scenario your Characters should be travelling to the town of Hallt. If you are running a one-off adventure, the Characters can simply begin in a carriage, or riding alongside, with the Litigant Goswin Samter who has business in Hallt. Depending on your Characters’ backgrounds, they may be colleagues, employees, or friends of Samter. If not, they may simply be fellow travellers sharing a carriage, or otherwise on the road to Hallt as Samter’s carriage passes by. Either way, they should be present for the Horseman’s attack on Samter, and given reason to seek shelter in Hallt.

## HEXENSNACHT

The festival of Hexensnacht and its twin, Geheimnisnacht, are the only nights of the year when both Mannslieb and Morrslieb are certain to be full in the sky — on all other nights, Morrslieb does as it pleases, waxing and waning to unknowable whims. Hexensnacht occurs in the depths of winter, and marks the turning of the old year into the new. It is followed by Hexenstag, the first day of the new year.

Most citizens of the Empire would not dare to leave their homes after dark on Hexensnacht, save for Morr’s dedicated priests, who keep a watchful vigil on the disquieted dead who stir on such nights.





## HELL RIDES TO HALLT

With an unnatural horseman roving the wilds, the Characters are forced to seek shelter in Hallt, an isolated town at the foot of the Grey Mountains. While the town's high walls may provide some comfort, the horseman is on a mission, which he plans to carry out in the town this very night.

### HALLT

Hallt sits at the bottom of the basin of the Grey Mountains, where two of the River Schilder's tributaries meet. It is mostly a farming town, producing crops of hops, corn and pumpkins, and known locally for the wool produced from its sheep herds. Many of the local farms bring their goods to Hallt for market before going to the larger town of Eilhart. Hallt is also the last town before travellers venture up into the mountains. The inns are welcoming to travellers, known to provide good fare, mainly consisting of pumpkin, and warm woollen blankets — for a price. Hallt sits on two tributaries that flow down to the Reik; this steady flow of water enables the turning of the mills that grind grain for the well-hopped beer that Hallt is well known for. Hallt is thus a prosperous if isolated town.

Reeve Elva Fellgiebel oversees the town. Her late husband, Karsten, held the role of Reeve for twenty-six years, but upon his death his young wife took on the position. In passing she is often referred to as 'her ladyship' by the townsfolk, partially in jest, but also as an honest mark of respect. Elva makes a living from land ownership and brewing. She rents several morgen of good land to the local farmers. She owns the largest brewery in the town, which also brings in considerable income.

As one rides into the verdant valley heading towards Hallt, a tall and venerable windmill dominates the landscape. Large old standing stones are dotted around the valley and in the town itself — enduring monuments to the faith that permeated the lands before the ascension of Sigmar. These ancient stones are inscribed with runes marking Hallt as once being a place of importance to the old tribes that predated the Empire, though quite a few have become damaged — either ravaged by time or quarried by heedless locals for building materials.

The bustling town is surrounded by imposing stone walls. Within their confines the town plays host to a number of inns, a Sigmarite temple, a town hall and a covered market. Hallt also boasts a number of large grain warehouses with adjacent breweries, from which the heady smell of beer wafts, each bearing the distinctive bitter smell of the brewers' favoured hops.

Even in these winter months, when many towns would be quiet with trade at a near standstill, Hallt is still a hive of activity. This is the time of year when the grains that have been harvested are turned into the fine beers and ales that Hallt is known for, and as the year comes to an end the first barrels are consumed, used in hot spiced beverages. A bonfire is lit and offerings are made to Sigmar, Taal, and perhaps other powers, to ward off evil spirits, and to welcome the coming of longer days and spring.

As a town devoted to brewing, there is also a history of herbalism and alchemy in Hallt, with locally distilled elixirs and medicinal salves despatched to all corners of the Empire.







## BACKGROUND

A year ago, a blacksmith who had moved Hallt just a few seasons before was executed for a crime he did not commit. Friedwart Hauptfehlt was beheaded for murdering the local priestess of Sigmar, Ute Bott. Apparently, the murder was a crime of passion, thought to be a product of a secret passion Hauptfehlt held for the Ruinous Powers and their servants.

This conviction was all a cover. Ute had been in the process of uncovering the presence of a hidden cult within the town. Once they uncovered his investigations, the cult had Ute killed and Friedwart framed and ultimately executed for the murder. The cult, for its part, was entirely unaware that Friedwart was a mutant, and would have been shocked to discover that a single beheading would not be enough to kill the man.

As a result of Friedwart's mutation, a second head was located in his torso, one which could be hidden under a fold of skin. This other head has an entirely different personality, which calls itself Gismondo. While Friedwart died, Gismondo lives on. This second head fondly remembers a simpler time when Friedwart, its 'top head', took care of most of the business of living, and seeks vengeance both for the harm done against itself and for the murder of Ute. The very night of the execution, Gismondo rose from the grave. Not dead, nor undead, but seeking revenge.

Skilled in metal-working, Gismondo fashioned gruesome armour and weapons, acquiring the knowledge from observing Friedwart, who had been a skilled farrier prior to working as a blacksmith. In the months since his strange second birth, Gismondo has adopted several guises to gather both resources and information. He operated as both a highwayman and, somewhat ironically, as an executioner, as this allows him to wear a hood hiding a fake head.

Finally, Gismondo has gathered the information he needed to take his revenge, adopting the guise of 'The Dullahan', a headless horseman, the old myth lending its presence to new and terrifying legend Gismondo has begun to forge.

## THE COUNCIL OF VICISSITUDE

The cult operating in Hallt is known privately as the 'Council of Vicissitude'. They are ostensibly a fertility cult, certain that their investigations of ancient rituals will bless all of Hallt and its surrounds with endless bounty. In a time-tested manner for groups which must work in secret, they disguise their actions by acting as a council of regional business owners. The council's membership is drawn from both Hallt and the few scattered villages that surround it, with likely candidates initiated into the cult's horrific rites each Hexensnacht. Their main ritual space is in the basement of the old windmill outside of town. It's an ideal location as recent improvements in the town's watermills have rendered the old windmill more or less defunct, which means there's little chance of the 'council' being disturbed. Happily for cult, though not for Hallt, the windmill was created from stone hewn from the ancient ogham stones that surround Hallt. This perversion of the Old Faith of those who raised the stones has resulted in terrible energies gathering there.

There is a second, deeper hidden basement, where the cult maintains a store of alchemical potions, and the collected heads of their sacrifices, through which they commune and venerate ancient spirits. The cult has through visions been directed to synthesise various alchemical potions and draughts that are used to taint wine and beer throughout the Empire. For what purpose they do not know, but the 'fertility' spirits that inhabit the windmill promise them much in return; that their farms will never run fallow, that they will enjoy endless good health, and that winter will turn away from Hallt, ushering in an endless spring. The growth of out-of-season crops in the depths of winter in the cultists' farms highlights the strength of the windmill's spirits — proof enough for the cult's burgeoning membership.

In truth, there are no ancient spirits, at least none that would dare call the windmill home. The 'spirits' are servants of Tzeentch, the cult yet another guise worn by the Changer of Ways. Though they do not know it, the cultists serve this ruinous power in all their actions. Of course, this duplicity pleases Tzeentch greatly.





## The Remaining Cultists

The surviving core of the cult is made up of the Reeve of Hallt, Elva Fellgiebel; the mason, Ewald Auffarth; the falconer, Diomira Kiefer, and the executioner, Anselm Buchberger. They are all locals to Hallt, though some travel the region as called for by their profession. Other local members are detailed below, but all were recently killed by the horseman. A few cult members not local to Hallt arrived recently. Schneck, Backmaye, and Harbutt journeyed to the Hallt in search of safety as the horseman's campaign of revenge escalated. Of these, the horseman has already killed one, and is sharpening his axe for the others.

For the last few months the horseman has plagued the cult, with minor members slain as 'The Dullahan' haunted the roads around Hallt. The first few deaths were those who initially accused Friedwart. As Gismondo murdered them, dragging from each various concessions and accusations, he came to realise that he is hunting a select few, all of whom bear a small tattoo, the 'Eye of the Heteroclit', on the little finger of their right hand. As a result, the horseman has gained a reputation for removing his victims' right hands. Gismondo is not sure of the tattoo's meaning, but has begun removing his victim's hands so he can study the tattoos at his leisure — these arcane markings change constantly, possibly due to some magic.

So far the town elders have refrained from calling in official bounty hunters or soldiers from Altdorf or larger towns, blaming the deaths on roving bandits, unlikely accidents, or copy-cat killers. The reality is that the cult is fearful of drawing attention that could uncover them or their work, in particular because a vital ritual is planned for Hexennacht, the following day.

The ritual promises to secure the cult's ultimate goal of bringing endless bounty to Hallt, and make the horseman irrelevant. This is partially correct — the ritual will summon a terrible Chaos Spawn, which is certain to devour the horseman, the cult members, the town of Hallt, and some sizable proportion of the surrounding area, all in service to one of the Lord of Change's unknowable goals.

## PART 1: HIGHWAY TO HALLT

The New Year, *Hexensnacht*, is approaching, the Reikland's highways and byways are covered in snow, and in the distance the sun sets behind the snow-capped Grey Mountains. A cold wind blows and the looming trees of the Reikwald forest grow tall and thick on both sides of the muddy road. Owls hoot and wolves howl, their calls penetrating the woodland's darkness. A troupe of weary travellers coming from Bögenhafen in the south on a wagon are journeying to the town of Hallt. The group are accompanied by their friend and compatriot, the Litigant Goswin Samter. Goswin has been called to return to his hometown to aid the townsfolk. A series of murders have taken place, and Goswin has brought along his friends to help solve the mystery.

That is true, for the most part. Goswin is a member of the cult and has been called to assist in this year's ritual. While he has been assured by his fellows that talk of the horseman is overblown, Goswin is taking no chances, and has hired the Character's to protect him. As the wagon rumbles along, Goswin explains that this time of year is always rife with attacks from highwaymen, bandits, and the fae creatures that venture out from the dark depths of the Reikwald. In particular, he tells of the tale of the Dullahan, the headless horseman who was said to haunt the town in ages past.

### THE REMAINING CULTISTS

Member	Occupation	Cult Position	Status
Elva Fellgiebel	Reeve of Hallt	Head Priestess	Alive
Ewald Auffarth	Mason	Keeper of the Way	Alive
Diomira Kiefer	Falconer	Unwavering Eye	Alive
Anselm Buchberger	Executioner	Gatherer of Gourds	Alive
Goswin Samter	Litigant	Stitcher of Lies	Alive
Gerwin Schuhbeck	Fishmonger	Interrogator	Dead, killed last week
Hunfried Mauss	Farmer	Lensholder	Dead, killed a few weeks ago
Ehrentraud Neuner	Farmer	Participant	Dead, killed a few weeks ago
Linde Schenk	Participant	Participant	Alive, recently came to Hallt
Markolf Bachmaye	Brewer	Participant	Alive, recently came to Hallt
Aimar Harbutt	Mason	Participant	Dead, killed yesterday near Hallt





## GOSWIN SAMTER

Goswin is a short, rotund, balding man, with light-grey hollow eyes, ruddy cheeks, and a crooked nose. Fond of commanding attention and displaying his wealth, he wears fine robes for his profession, with a thick fur coat to protect against the winter gales. He gesticulates while stressing his own importance, his hands displaying an array of expensive and garish rings. Between the trumpeting of his ruddy nose, phlegmy coughs and sips of his liquor, Goswin explains the legend of the ‘The Dullahan’, his eyes often darting about as another beast in the woods brays or caws.

*‘The Dullaban is a creature of darkness, a headless horseman, one who was cursed at death who now rides bringing death to all who see it. It is a fatal omen, and only those of a noble heart, or the truly innocent, can survive such an encounter.’*

Goswin coughs and curses the bitter night before resuming his dark tale.

*‘However, this is all just simple rural superstition. Folk speak of killing the Dullaban with heartwood stakes from willow trees cut during a full moon, or with a silver blade. They say that if the missing head is found, the Dullaban can be made to leave and return from whence it came. I can tell you, there is no truth to these tales. No doubt the legend is a cover for some brigand or other preying on fair Hallt!’*

If you are running a one-off adventure, now would be a good time for the Players to introduce their Characters. Ask each Player how their Character has dressed to deal with the cold, how well they cope with it, and what their impression is of the murders and the tale of the Dullahan.

As the sun sets, the cold, clear night sky is illuminated by the evening’s first stars and the two moons, Mannslieb and Morrslieb; the former a waning crescent as if a lidded eye, the latter a smaller green skull-like orb, casting its dark energies across the lands. All around the nocturnal animals have gone quiet, and from the crest of the hill the lights of Hallt are visible. The small walled town — marked out by the pinpricks of lantern light and rising smoke from chimneys — looks inviting in the bitter night.

### GOSWIN SAMTER – BARRISTER (GOLD 1)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	35	35	35	45	30	30	30	50	55	45	16

**Traits:** Weapon (Dagger) +6

**Skills:** Bribery 65, Charm 65, Consume Alcohol 55, Language (Classical) 55, Lore (Law 67, Theology 53), Perception 40

**Talents:** Blather

**Trappings:** Books of Law (3 GC), Silver Dagger, Fine Clothing, 2d10 silver shillings



## THE RIDER ATTACKS

From the oily darkness, galloping hooves rumble and clatter as branches snap and bushes rustle. From the night approaches the headless horseman, clad in black armour atop a snorting warhorse. The horseman holds aloft a large curved axe, unmistakably that of an executioner. As he rides past the carriage, he brutally cleaves the head from one of the steeds pulling the wagon. Slamming into the horse's corpse, the carriage topples over, and those within are sent flailing. Each Character should make an **Average (+20) Athletics** Test or suffer 1 wound, unmodified by Toughness Bonus or armour. The unfortunate coachman and any Characters on the exterior of the coach are hurled into the night, slamming into the frozen earth. Treat this as a fall of 3 yards (**WFRP** page 166) for the Characters — the Coachman is killed instantly. From the bloody stump of the slain horse's neck a tide of warm blood flows, staining the white snow and sending wisps of steam into the night air. The overwhelming stench of blood mixed with fear is alarming.

Enquire how the Characters react to the situation. Do they draw weapons? Do they seek shelter behind the wagon? Do they run down the road to the town? Or do they run and hide in the woods? No matter their reaction, give each Player the chance to respond.

Before the Characters can recover, however, a terrified Goswin bolts away from the Carriage and towards the woods screaming *'He has come for me!*', stumbling over tree roots and bushes. The horseman turns his steed about, and it rears up before charging back down the road after Goswin.

If any of the troupe try to stop the horseman they are charged at by his horse and knocked out of the way. Make it clear to the Players that fighting the horseman head-on could be very dangerous. Remember that when acting aggressively, the horse by merit of its size causes Fear in Average sized opponents (See **WFRP**, page 341). The Characters should have a chance to dodge out of the way, and those who are struck by the warhorse hurt, but refrain from allocating critical hits — the horseman is adept at controlling his steed, and only seeks to kill those responsible for his execution.

### A NOTE ON NOTATION

In the stat blocks in *Hell Rides to Hallt*, you will notice that the Armour Trait now has an extra notation written in brackets after the amount of AP the trait provides. This number is the total AP, including Toughness Bonus, to be removed from most attacks which don't ignore armour in some way. This is purely for your own convenience. For example, the headless horseman has Armour 2 (8), meaning that in most cases, you will remove 8 from any damage done to the horseman.





## THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN

The horseman wears armour that has been darkened and cast with grimacing faces — clearly the work of a fine blacksmith. He rides a large black warhorse, called 'Hel', and brandishes a sword and an executioner's axe. Gismondo has a flair for the dramatic, and he has hidden several Incendiary Bombs inside some carved pumpkins. Once ignited, they emit a sulphurous gas and burst into flame mid-air. Gismondo's voice sounds as if it is coming from inside almost hollow armour, a reverberating growl that rumbles through the night. In life, Hauptfehlt would often entertain his 'brother' Gismondo with poems and riddles. Now Gismondo has picked up the habit of speaking in rhyme or riddle, whenever possible, especially just after a murder.

### GISMONDO – THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	75	42	61	67	47	39	34	43	48	24	20

**Traits:** Armour 2 (8), Mutation (No Head – ignore all hits which would strike the head), Ranged (Incendiary Bombs), Weapon (Executioners Axe) +10

**Skills:** Intimidate 78, Ride (Horse) 55, Melee (Basic) 85, Ranged (Thrown) 66, Stealth (Rural) 60

**Talents:** Combat Master 2, Deadeye Shot, Dual Wielder 1, Frightening 1, Hardy 1, Roughrider

### FORTUNE

Though terrible and strange, fate has plans for the Headless Horseman of Hallt. He enjoys two Fate and two Fortune points. If possible, the GM should use these to keep him alive at least until the Characters reach the windmill (page 20).

### THE EXECUTIONER'S AXE

The Horseman's Axe is a brutally efficient weapon, designed to sever heads with a single blow. Treat it as a Hand Weapon (**WFRP**, page 294) which enjoys the Impact quality when used from a raised position, such as from horseback, part way up a stairs, or when one's enemy has their head resting on a chopping block. If the axe scores a critical hit on a Character's head, roll twice on the critical hit table and choose the worst result.

## HEL – THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN'S STEED

Hel is a fine horse, and while stories abound about the terrible beast that carries the Horseman about the lands — that it is undead, or a daemon, or a mutant with seven nostrils and a lizard's tail — there is nothing supernatural about Hel. Gismondo 'liberated' her from a noble not far from Eilhart, and she has been his loyal comrade ever since.

### HEL – THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN'S STEED

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
7	45	-	55	45	15	30	-	15	15	10	23

**Traits:** Armour 2 (6), Size (Large), Stride, Trained (Mount, Ride, War, Magic), Weapon +7

Characters who stand in the horseman's way are briefly met by the 'gaze' of unseeing eyes — despite his clothing and armour, Gismondo has never had trouble 'seeing' everything around him. He will look towards their right hand (Characters notice this with a **Difficult (-10) Perception Test**). As they do not bear the cult's tattoo the horseman leaves them be. With a rasping voice, the horseman mutters, *'No curse'd eye marked out in ink, you are no friend of theirs, I think'*. If they are wearing gloves, he asks them to remove them. If they do not comply, or otherwise persist, he attempts to ride them down or fling an incendiary bomb at them, hoping the flames will distract them while he pursues his true quarry.

However, if pressed, the horseman will attack anyone who does not back down. He seeks to avoid being surrounded, but is a dangerous fighter. If a challenger backs down or retreats, he does give chase.

The horseman pursues Goswin above all others, charging him down, and with a single swift blow, decapitates the man. Dismounting, the horseman also chops off Goswin's right hand, and takes his head and hand as trophies. If a Character is nearby, they hear the horseman rhyme, as he cuts the hand off, *'An eye on the hand, two eyes in the head, revenge for Ute, as I said'*.



## PART 2: REST YOUR HEAD, WEARY TRAVELLER

With Goswin likely dead, the night only growing colder, and a murderous horseman about, the Characters would be wise to seek shelter in Hallt. Should they do otherwise, see the rules for Exposure in **WFRP**, page 181, and the stats for Direwolves on page 328 — it is almost Hexensnacht, after all.

Once the Characters arrive in the town of Hallt, running, screaming, or however the Players feel their Characters would react to the Horseman's attack, the town Watch greets them at the town gates. They are suspicious, having heard screams and thundering hooves in the distance, but readily believe the Characters' story — it has become a common occurrence as of late. If the Characters have brought Goswin's body with them, some of the Watch are horrified at the sight of the decapitated corpse and its severed right hand.

Looking over the body, the leader of the Watch, Bertille Lindemann, makes it known that this is the fourth murder in the last month, and one of a series that have taken place over the last year, all committed by the Dullahan, a horseman who terrorises the roads about Hallt. This is, of course, hardly news to the Characters. As they are talking, they hear the church bell in the background chime the closing of the gates. Its ringing seems somehow off and odd to the Characters, as if out of sequence. If questioned, the Watch will say that the bell has been like that for as long as they can remember.

### BERTILLE LINDEMANN

Bertille is a heavy-set woman carrying a stout club, with her dark-brown hair tied back under a wooskin cap. She wears the livery of a Reiklander, having once served in the state army. Her face bears the scars of battle, and on her neck is a tattoo of a hammer, a common practice for some soldiers particularly devoted to Sigmar. She is not the most eloquent person, or the most subtle, but she is not rude. On a good day makes time for the local children and often can be found sat telling them tall stories about Orcs, Goblins, and the heroism of Sigmar and Ulric. She has never faced the horseman, but she has seen it riding in the distance. She is also suspicious of some in the town. She wonders why these murders are happening, and believes there is a lot going on right under nose. She is new to Hallt, having only been stationed in the town two years ago after the last head of the Watch was murdered. Bertille distrusts the town's executioner, Anselm Buchberger, and suspects he harbours darker desires.

Bertille, along with another half dozen of the Watch, leads the Characters into the town, closing the heavy wooden gates behind them. The town itself is typical of the region, with stone and wooden construction, tiled roofs, and a small temple to Sigmar at its heart.

If questioned, Bertille explains what she knows of the horseman, all the while making the protective sign of Sigmar's Hammer. She explains that The Dullahan, as the horseman is known locally, has terrorised these lands for some time. She has heard tales of it attacking all around, from Eilhart to Mellerfelden. She is unsure if it is a creature of flesh, undead, or a spirit of some sort. She curses the Characters as fools for braving the night, though she shows sympathy if they were coming to Hallt to offer aid.

When they are finished questioning her, or if they choose not to do so, Bertille turns to the Watch men and says,

*'Take the body of the Goswin to the temple of Sigmar. I will take our guests somewhere warmer.'* Turning to regard the Characters, she continues, *'You look as if you are in need of something to warm you up. Hallt is home to some fine digestifs, as well as headless axemen!'*

## THE CALM TOAD

The local inn is The Calm Toad, with a sign hanging outside of a toad snoring at a table with a tankard of ale in hand. Inside, the inn is warm and inviting, with a few tables, a roaring fire, and antlers and stuffed animal heads hanging on the walls. A collection of townsfolk are inside, nursing warm ales and mulled wines. A few cheers erupt from one corner of the main room, where some of the patrons are playing a game of quoits, with each player aiming to throw a small ring of wood over a wooden dowel. The expansive landlady, Gerwine Brotzmann, is ladling mulled beer into tankards, drawing from a steaming pot that rests over a stove. She is all smiles as the Characters enter, with Bertille making some space for them at a table near the fire before bringing them all a hot drink, asking if they want some food. Should the Characters accept, they may remove any *Fatigued* conditions they gained on their journey.

Whilst warming themselves by the fire, the Characters have the opportunity to take in the inn's smoky and congenial atmosphere and to observe the varied patrons relaxing after a day's work in the mills and breweries. The Characters may talk to the patrons if they wish, learning more about the recent events in the town, and a variety of rumours regarding the Dullahan. The townsfolk are wary of the newcomers, but few will be able to resist hearing of the attack, if the Characters make it known they witnessed the Horseman first hand. An **Average (+20) Gossip Test**, or an offering of a drink, will be all it takes to get a patron talking.

Many of the townsfolk quickly make the sign of the hammer and mutter prayers to Sigmar before talking nervously about the Dullahan themselves. The rumours are wild and far fetched, though most have an element of truth to them. The Characters have to try and work out fact from fiction and the truth from superstition. While the Characters are conversing with the locals a **Difficult (-20) Perception Test** allows them to notice that the town's clock chimes out of sequence.





## RUMOURS AT THE CALM TOAD

Some of the rumours and stories the Characters are able to discover whilst talking to the townsfolk are detailed below. You may choose randomly from these, or tell whichever seems most appropriate. Feel free to create your own terrifying tall-tales as well!

- ☠ The horseman is undead and has been brought to life by the evil magics that seep into the land from the castle of Drachenfels. The Enchanter 'imself could be in that armour!
- ☠ The Dullahan be the ghost of a dead executioner, murdered in Eilhart for the crime of killing a noble-born woman. Now he's looking for her, killing anyone he thinks might be in love with her too!
- ☠ The horseman is said to be unable to cross running water, and can only be harmed by the wood from a willow tree cut down on the night of a full moon. Probably he's extra vulnerable tonight, with both moons so full. Not that you'll catch me out an' about.
- ☠ Many of the victims have their right hand chopped off, though no one rightly knows why. Some say 'e's making a collection of 'em and joining 'em up, palm to wrist, to make a whip to scourge honest folk!
- ☠ Killed a dozen folk, he 'as. There were them two farmers, a fishmonger and a mason. What's more is, many of the victims were friends. I reckon the horseman's got an axe to grind, so to speak!
- ☠ All have been decapitated, but only some have had their right hand removed. What's the meaning there, then? (In truth, the cult has killed some people too - victims for its coming sacrifice!)
- ☠ The horseman brings with him terrible famines and poor harvests, everyone knows that! A pity, as harvests near Hallt have been excellent for years now. All the same, he's probably that's what caused 'alf the grain in two to rot last week.
- ☠ Dankwater Brewery is angry over a spoilt batch of grain. Could be it was mould, but they're blaming the folks at Grey Mounts River Ale for it. Could be it was them too, they're rivals going back years, on account of who gets what grain from what farm. It'll come to blows yet!
- ☠ You see they only have bread and cheese tonight? On account of the price of food — that spoilt grain has everyone hoarding what they have. The hungry gap will be wide this year for the first time in a long while...
- ☠ The horseman can't come into the town, on account of the walls, and them stone circles too. The Old Faith is strong in these parts, and keeps Daemons at bay! They used some of them old stones to make all sorts around here — the walls, the old mill, and more than that too!
- ☠ Ah, things haven't been the same since old Ute died last year. Best Priestess of Sigmar we ever 'ad — attendance at temple has never been so high since! That new fella's drunk half the time anyway, if Sigmar will forgive me for saying so.
- ☠ That fella over there, Markolf Bachmaye, he's a good laugh — in town trading for ale, and drinking the town dry as he goes! Bad luck he 'as though. I saw him talking to them two farmers afore they were killed — won't be buying any of their grain now! Come to think of it, he was trading with that mason what the horseman did for too... Some people have stinking luck!
- ☠ There is one other traveller staying at the inn that night, a brewer, Markolf Bachmaye. He is complaining loudly about the quality of the inn's ale, and is outraged that they won't buy his mead instead, 'far better quality than this vile brown water.'





## GUESTS OF ILL REPUTE



### Markolf Bachmayer

Characters asking after Bachmayer will find him in a back corner of The Calm Toad, drinking, singing, and behaving raucously. Even if they are not looking for the man, he may make himself known by loudly demanding more beer, *'with a damn sight less water in it this time!*' He is happy to complain about life in general to anyone who is willing to listen, but ends each complaint with a laugh all the same, as though one could hardly expect much more from life than misery in any case. He has the ruddy-red complexion of someone who enjoys their drink, a portly physique, and gaudy, expensive-looking (if tatty) clothing. His hair is dirty brown in need of a cut, and his beard is wild and greying, also in need of a cut.

He wears a badge marking him out as a member of a regional Brewers' Guild. Whilst talking with Bachmayer, he goes on at length about the region's different ales and beers, where is best for what and why. He can compare the virtues of lagers, ales, stouts, pilsners, porters, and more all night to any who will listen. Bachmayer has recently begun brewing mead, and secretly hopes that the cult will bring him an endless supply of honey to use for this purpose. Thus far his hives have been active all year round, but the honey comes in odd flavours and colours. It is only by brewing it into alcohol that it is palatable at all, but this mead sells well.

Bachmayer knows of the horseman and may relay some of the rumours above, though he is more interested in talking of brewing than childish rumours of things that go bump in the night. Whilst talking to Bachmayer, there is a chance that a Character notices the gaudy ring on the little finger of his right hand. This ring covers his cult tattoo — a **Difficult (-10) Perception Test** is required to notice this. If questioned about the killings specifically, Bachmayer reveals he knew some of those killed through his work with the town council, but he knows of no connection between the victims. A **Difficult (-10) Perception Test**, opposed by his **Cool**, reveals that Markolf is not telling the truth — he knows almost every victim through the Council of Vicissitude, of which he is an enthusiastic member.

Whilst the Characters are chatting with the locals, the Reeve, Elva Fellgiebel enters the inn, or otherwise locates the Characters wherever they may be, and makes herself known to them. She thanks them for recovering Goswin's body (if they did), and ask about the horseman. She appears concerned (as indeed she is), but offers no theories on the horseman, except to say that there is a lot of wild talk regarding him, which she has no intention of adding to. She offers them a night's rest at the inn as a small thanks for their efforts with Goswin, if they recovered his body. Whilst at the inn, Elva also talks with Markolf, and another local woman, Diomira Kiefer (another cultist), who has been playing quoits.

### MARKOLF BACHMAYER – BREWER (SILVER 5)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	38	29	41	52	30	30	30	35	40	45	18

**Traits:** Armour (Body) 1 (6),  
Weapon (Knuckledusters) +7

**Skills:** Charm 55, Consume Alcohol 55,  
Lore (Local 50), Melee (Brawling) 49,  
Perception 40, Trade (Brewer) 40

**Talents:** Carouser, Doomed (*A stiff neck would serve thee*)

**Trappings:** Guild License, Leather Jerkin,  
Knuckledusters, 2d10 silver shillings





## Elva Fellgiebel

Elva Fellgiebel is a striking woman, wearing fine but functional garb, fitting her role as Reeve. She bears her badge of office with pride, and typically wears a wide-brimmed hat with a peacock feather set in place by a silver pin. She has a long face with thin lips and angular nose, framed by shoulder-length russet curls. Though her chin is raised with an air of haughtiness, her warm amber eyes are welcoming. Elva owns an opulent townhouse, is landlord to a number of local farmers, and she also owns the largest local brewery — *Fellgiebel's Finest Fermentations*. She is the cult leader and is being courted by Gunter, a cowering Silversmith who has no clue of his fiancée's involvement with the cult. As the cult leader, Elva is skilled in some of the magical dark arts, and is also a knowledgeable alchemist.

### ELVA FELLGIEBEL – REEVE (GOLD 1)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	46	34	32	31	54	43	49	67	61	42	15

**Traits:** Weapon (Sword) +7

**Skills:** Bribery 52, Charm 65, Cool 67, Channelling 66, Dodge 48, Intimidate 39, Language (Magick) 74, Lore (Dhar) 72, Melee (Basic) 53

**Talents:** Arcane Lore (Dark), Frightening (Causes Fear 1), Kingpin, Petty Magic

**Trappings:** Fine Clothing, Ritual Books, Writs and Legal Documents, 1d10 gold crowns

**Spells:** Blast, Corrosive Blood, Dart, Drain, Eavesdrop, Magical Shield, Manifest Lesser Daemon

## PART 3: HEADS WILL ROLL

As night draws in, the Characters will have to find rest somewhere in the town. The Calm Toad is the most likely place, though if they refuse to sleep there for any reason there are poorly guarded warehouses. If the Characters seek to avoid sleep, remember that it is very cold outside, and they will begin to accumulate Fatigued Conditions, and risk exposure if they fail to settle down.

### KEEP YOUR HEAD ABOUT YOU

As snow falls outside and the patrons of the inn have retired to bed, the Characters finally find some rest. Rough linen and straw provide some comfort, if they have chosen to sleep at the inn, while bellies full of food and ale allows them to sleep soundly. The only sound is that of the howling wind, and the clatter of shutters not secured tightly enough. Here and there, libations and prayers against the ills of Hexensnacht are carried on the wind. However, the night is not a calm affair, and before long a rhythmic tapping can be heard — the sound of heavy feet trodding across the slate roof of the Calm Toad.

Characters awaken on an **Average (+20) Perception Test** if they are sleeping in the inn. Ask the Characters how they respond, and how they feel about being awakened at night by the noises.

If the Characters didn't wake up, or did not sleep at the inn, they are awakened as they hear screams and the sound of a door being flung open. A **Difficult (-10) Perception Test** allows a Character to notice that the lone candle that was left burning is not as it should be. Rather than having shrunk over the hours it has in fact grown. There is little time to investigate this oddity, however, as the sound of screams, and slamming doors intensifies. Investigating the commotion requires the Characters to take candles or lamps as the inn will be dark — though there is enough light for those with the *Night Vision* Talent to see by.

What little light the candles throw reveals the brewer, Markolf, dressed in little more than a shirt and trousers, running down the corridor towards the stairs, his face ashen with terror, screaming for help. Behind him stands the horseman, his black armour glowing orange in the flickering candlelight cast through an open door. The horseman marches forward, brandishing his axe, intent on Markolf's head. Each purposeful step seems to shake the very ground beneath him, and his armour clanks ominously with every stride *'Ale and rum, just watch him run. Wine and liquor? Blood is thicker.'*

Markolf, for his part, flees out of the inn and into the freezing night as quickly as possible. If the Characters chose to sleep away from the inn, then they are awakened by the horseman pursuing Markolf through the streets instead.



## FIGHT OR FLIGHT

The players have two options here; fight or hide. Fighting the horseman likely reveals that he does indeed bleed, if they are able to wound him. He is intent on his quarry, not the Characters, and pushes past or around them where possible. Fighting with the horseman leads to him dropping a pendant — a twin-tailed comet that is typically worn by a member of the Cult of Sigmar. Any Character making an **Average (+20) Perception Test** notices that something was dropped, though not exactly what unless they retrieve it. The name of the priestess, Ute Bott, is inscribed on the back of the pendant. If the Characters cause too much trouble for the horseman, he throws his incendiary pumpkin bombs at them, and rely on terror and luck to make his escape. He may jump out or in a window, or scurry up a prepared rope onto a nearby roof, which he quickly cuts once he reaches the top. He continues his pursuit of Markolf as soon as he has lost the Characters.

It is possible that while facing the horseman the players might wish to question him. If asked why he hunts and kills, or who he hunts and kills, the horseman in his guttural voice responds in a strange rhyme.

*Just those curs who bear the eye, they took her life, and now must die. Her prayers unheeded, Ute rots. Though Sigmar failed her — I will not.'*

If asked who he is, the horseman responds with the following:

*'I had a head for the blade, they a blade for my head. I took up that axe, and keep it fed.'*

## OFF WITH HIS HEAD!

Should the Characters be unable to prevent the horseman from reaching Markolf, or if they choose to hide, they witness the following scene; Markolf, half frozen from the biting wind, is barely visible in the gloom and drifting snow. He cries out for help, hoping the town Watch will come to his aid. *'He's here! He's here! The Horseman has come for me!'*

The horseman runs in Markolf's direction, throwing his axe so that it slices through the air and shears off Markolf's head with unearthly precision. Markolf's body drops to the ground, spraying gouts of blood from the stump of his neck. With Markolf dead, the horseman approaches his body and removes the right hand, plucking a ring from that severed appendage. He calls for his horse, and gallops off, the beast leaping clear over the town walls and carrying the horseman away into the deep dark night.

Investigating the body of Markolf reveals that the ring from the little finger of his right hand was removed and dropped on the ground, and that inside his shirt is a notebook. The book is out of focus and blurry no matter how it is observed, but there are clearly diagrams, maps, and writing contained within it. Understanding the book is impossible without the amber lens (page 17). If a Character has the *Sense Magic* talent, they may make a **Challenging (+0) Lore (Alchemy or Magick) Test**. A success indicates that the notebook is enchanted with the Jade Wind in some fashion. However, Characters getting +2 or more SL will note that under this enchantment strong hints of *Dhar* can be detected — a hint at that the touch of Tzeentch is upon the book.

The Characters then encounter the town Watch, responding to the fracas with just enough speed to arrive after the horseman has departed. They recover Markolf's body, and ask them questions regarding the attack. The Reeve will also arrive, watching and listening most attentively.

## THAT'S SOME NECK

If the Characters are able to drive off the horseman and save Markolf, they may find him less grateful than they expect. The attack leaves him paranoid, bordering on terror. He can be calmed with a **Challenging (+0) Charm Test**, but otherwise stands muttering to himself and shivering until the Reeve arrives. Characters who make a **Challenging (+0) Perception Test** notice that Markolf continually checks his pocket — this is to ensure that he hasn't lost his notebook.

Once he sees Elva Fellgiebel, Markolf immediately approaches her and begin angrily demanding why she has been ignoring his warnings. *'Surely you see now, Elva, that it is as we feared? We are found out and hunted! Does he know about the...'* The Reeve will not let him continue beyond this point, quickly having the Watch usher him away out of supposed concern for his well being. If they think quickly, a Character making an **Average (+20) Sleight of Hand Test** can recover the notebook from a distracted Markolf while 'helping' the guards.

## GOSWIN THE HEADLESS

What if the Characters managed to save Goswin Samter? In this case, they witness Goswin chat briefly with Markolf at the bar earlier in the evening — it is clear they both know each other — before the Litigant retires for the night, alone, to a sturdily locked room upstairs in the inn. The horseman comes for Goswin first, entering through a foolishly unlocked window and murdering him silently in the dead of the night. The horseman then throws Goswin's decapitated corpse into Markolf's room, which the brewer mistakes for the horseman, sending him fleeing into the hallway, as above. When Markolf flees the inn to escape his supposed attacker, the horseman sets upon him in the streets instead.



## PURPLE STAIN, PURPLE STAIN

If you wish, Markolf's body may be marked not once, but twice. While the horseman may have taken his hand, Markolf bears another tattoo, drawn in purple ink under his left armpit – a purple handprint. Unbeknownst even to his fellow conspirators, Markolf is a member of a far larger cult: The Purple Hand. If you are running this scenario as part of The Enemy Within campaign, the Characters may have already become aware of this cult, and Markolf's affiliation with them can serve to reinforce the presence of The Purple Hand at all levels of society. If you intend to run The Enemy Within in the future, this mark will foreshadow some of the events to come.

To what end has Markolf infiltrated the Cult of Vicissitude? Perhaps to guide the cultists towards a true understanding of their master, Tzeentch, but the ploys and machinations of the Changer of Ways are many and far beyond the grasp of most mortals.



## SOMETHING ROTTEN IN HALLT

Walking around town as the Characters visit locations like the Temple or breweries, or browse the market and stores, they may notice peculiar occurrences. Some of these have been hinted at already; the odd behaviour of the candle set beside their beds, and the strange sounds of bells and clock chimes. Pepper in additional oddities as they go about their day – a tree in the graveyard bearing leaves and fruit one minute, but looking lifeless the next, a large dog walking backwards down the street, pumpkins imploding when they walk by a large pumpkin patch at the edge of the town. There are moments of *déjà vu*, as the same black cat crosses their path. Streets seem to loop in odd ways, and the Characters may find themselves arriving at the same crossroads again and again.

Scatter these surreal occurrences around at random, and feel free to add your own strange quirks. The locals seem oblivious to these weird events, though most are aware that things have not been the same since Ute was killed. Some may be suspicious that many of the victims seem to be from the Reeve's unofficial 'council'. Build up a sense of fear and impending dread now that the horseman has finally attacked within the town walls.

## PART 4: A HEAD FOR FIGURES

The morning brings a gloomy atmosphere to Hallt. With the horseman having been seen inside the town walls, the sense that nowhere is safe pervades the townsfolk. Breakfast is barely palatable, and there are hushed voices speaking about the killings. If the Characters are having a meal at the inn, they are served oats and honey, which is overly sweet. During the meal, a single honey bee climbs out of the small pot of honey left on the table. It flies about for a moment before dropping dead.

For the townsfolk, however, life must go on. The gates of the town are opened, farmers and woodsmen arrive with their goods. A herd of sheep bustles into the town centre, and is guided to their pens. Several of the sheep are in lamb, very much out of season, but the farmer says this has been happening in recent years.

The locals are agitated, their long faces and furrowed brows highlight their unease, for this is the day of Hexxenstag, and the new year is not off to an auspicious start. Those townsfolk not preoccupied with their regular work instead set about gathering foliage from the woodsmen, using it to weave wreaths that are believed to ward off evil spirits when hung on the doors of their homes. Characters can make a **Challenging (+0) Lore (Theology) Test** to recognise the wreaths as being related to the old fertility cults that predate the Empire.

Through the town the local priest of Sigmar, Father Lothar, leads a procession carrying the recent dead into the temple. Hymns are sung and incense is wafted in a ritual designed to ease the passage of the dead into the next life, while the local gravedigger walks beside, measuring up the body (or bodies), ready for their coffins. Though such duties would normally fall to a priest of Morr, Hallt relies on travelling Moorite priests to see to the dead, so the fallen will be interred until such a figure passes this way.

The Characters are free to explore and investigate the town during the day. There are many people to speak with, though not all will be forthcoming as the Characters have now been potentially present at two of the horseman's appearances, and perhaps as many deaths, and so are starting to be considered bad luck. Investigations will typically require a **Difficult (-10) Gossip Test**, with members of the cult coming off particularly cold towards any probing questions. This coldness can be noticed with a secret **Hard (-20) Intuition Test**.





## THE TEMPLE OF SIGMAR, AND THE GRAVEYARD

Within the Temple resides Father Lothar Schmitt, though he also wanders the market offering blessings. He is sombre but happy to converse with the Characters. If asked about Ute, he explains how she was killed. He'll share the official story at least, that of Hauptfehl killing her in a moment of passion. Father Schmitt goes on to talk of the blacksmith's execution. Further questioning leads him to reveal that the body and head went missing after the swift execution.

Investigating the Temple and its grounds reveals Ute's grave — if the Characters have yet to hear of her, they still notice that her grave, alone in the graveyard, has been kept carefully tended and bears fresh flowers. An **Average (+20) Perception Test** reveals freshly dug earth behind the headstone. In the dirt there are numerous bones, and at least one fresh finger. Blood and torn flesh still cling to some of the bones. A close inspection reveals a tattoo on any fingers fresh enough to sport flesh.

It shows an eye with a spiral amber iris — the eye that marks members of the cult. The tattoo on the freshest of these fingers seems to warp and move as the Character's watch, before it disappears beneath the fingernail, almost as though it was aware that it was being watched.

Within the temple, there is a small shrine to Magnus the Pious. Any Character passing a **Challenging (+0) Perception Test** notices a small panel in the shrine that appears to be a door — any Character who specifically mentions checking the Shrine notices this automatically. A small indentation in the panel's face accepts Ute's pendant as a key. If the Characters are lacking this it can be forced open with an **Average (+20) Strength Test** — there will be no disguising the sound of cracking stone if they choose to do so. Inside is a notebook from Ute that describes her investigations of the cult within Hallt.

It explains that time seems to move differently for a small number of people, including the Reeve. They also say she has found the cult's sanctum, though fails to mention where.

*14th Pflugzeit*

*The feeling I have been unable to shake for so long now, the formless unease I have felt, has finally begun to take shape. Instead of relief, however, I have discovered only more to concern me. There are individuals in this town, including the Reeve Fellgiebel, for whom time itself makes bold accommodation. On three separate occasions, I have witnessed the Reeve Fellgiebel arrive back from a survey of her holdings before she had departed to do so. Moreover, certain of her nearby farms, such as that farmed by Hunfried Mauss, have grown all sorts of produce out of season. Strawberries in Sigmarzeit? I ask you.*

*It is clear that there are some in Hallt for whom the natural laws have been twisted and warped. I fear by what means they might have achieved this travesty. Were it not that so many in Hallt are good and stalwart folk, I would leave at once for Cathedral in Altdorf to seek aid, but if I leave now and draw down such wrath and fire on Hallt in error, what will I have achieved? I must see what I can uncover here before doing more — may Sigmar guide my hand in all things.*



*Ute Bott*  
Servant of Sigmar



## THE MARKET SQUARE

At the market square, rumours abound about the previous night's events and of the spoiled corn. Some say the grain rotted, while others claim it sprouted, but all are in agreement that it has definitely gone bad.

Most feel that something is wrong in Hallt, and some are calling for another bounty hunter to be sent for. If the Characters ask what happened to the first bounty hunter, they learn that one came all the way from Altdorf a few weeks back, but had apparently been killed by the horseman and buried in the Temple graveyard.

If the Characters are stout of heart, they can exhume the body, and find that he has both his head and hands, but that the body has rotted oddly, with much of his right side completely preserved, while maggots writhe in his left. This is an effect of the magic used to do away with the man — he drew too close to uncovering the cult, and the Reeve killed him personally. If you wish, the Bounty Hunter's corpse might provide an enjoyable jump scare as his preserved right hand suddenly jerks up, clutching one of the Characters by the throat. However, there is little else to learn from the body. The Temple of Sigmar and the Graveyard are described on page 16, should the Characters choose to visit there.

Listening to the farmers gossiping, the Characters learn about the home of Hunfried Mauss, a farmer who was murdered months earlier. While his family has moved away since his death, last night lantern light was seen coming from the farmstead. (See **Hunfried Mauss's Farmstead**.)

If the Characters are struggling at this point, feel free to throw some additional rumours their way, directing them towards Ute, Hauptfehlt, or the cult. If you wish, a peddler might be selling Ute's pendant, recovered from where the horseman dropped it last night. Most people are illiterate, and so no one has read Ute's name on the pendant just yet, as they would surely return it to the Temple if they knew it was hers.

All of the townsfolk, if they become comfortable with the Characters, may make mention of the excellent harvests, especially in recent years. Most put this down to the general character of the locals, their faith in Sigmar or Taal, or simply good luck. If pressed, a few note that certain farms — mainly those on land owned by the Reeve — are particularly productive, enjoying long growing seasons and prodigious harvests.

## HUNFRIED MAUSS'S FARMSTEAD

If the Characters choose to venture out to the farmstead, be sure to describe the odd feeling of not quite leaving the town behind them. While they are now out in the wilds and farms, they still feel the sensation of cobbled streets or wood panelled floors beneath them, as though they have not left Hallt at all. If the Characters expect it to still be early morning, make it late afternoon instead. If they ask how long it takes them to reach the Farmstead, be sure that it takes at least twice as long to return. If they choose to put the town behind them, they can walk for most of the day in any direction, only to find themselves arriving back at roughly the same time they set out.

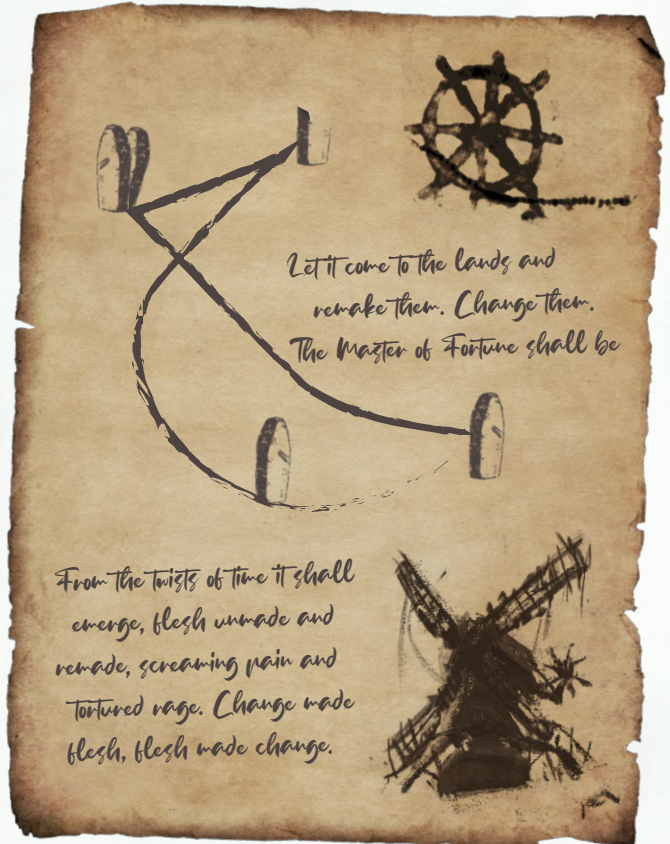
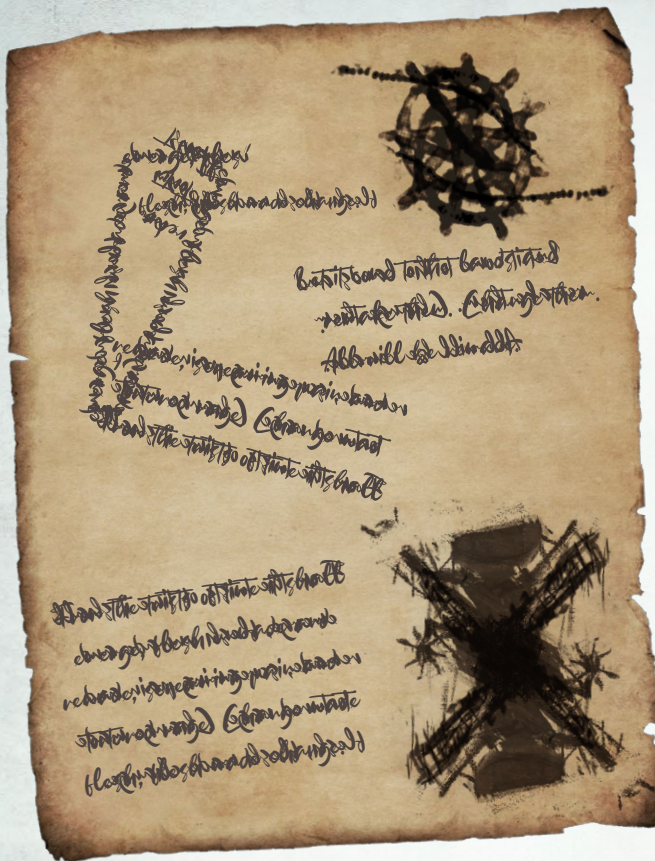
Hunfried's farmstead itself is typical of the region, a small two-bedroom cottage nestled in the shelter of a small hill, with fields of barley, hops, and of course, pumpkin about it. The fields have not been properly tended for some time, though neighbours have made an effort to see to those overwintering crops that they might themselves harvest — after all, the Mauss family are unlikely to miss it now. Characters with any kind of Lore (Herbs) or similar skills will notice the remains of some crops which, though now frost damaged and wilting, were clearly growing entirely out of season up to just a few days ago.

The interior of the farmstead is sparsely decorated, though various fetishes to local fertility gods abound — many feature a humanoid figure bedecked with plucked feathers which appears to move about the room whenever the characters turn away. It is harmless, however.

Inside the farmstead, under a loose floorboard that is spotted with a **Challenging (+0) Perception Test**, is a polished piece of amber coloured glass, clearly shaped to create a convex lens. This enchanted decryption device belongs to the cult, and was hidden with Hunfried — a 'gift' of the 'spirits' that haunt the windmill. It reveals the secrets of Markolf's notebook if its blurred pages are viewed through the lens. The text reveals dark incantations, diagrams, and the nuances for mixing alchemical potions, as well as the fact that they are all designed to help bring a servant of 'The Master of Fortune' into being.







The only other feature of note is a series of four tapestries, clearly the most valuable thing in the room. They depict the four seasons, with figures variously planting, harvesting and consuming assorted crops, depending on the season. If viewed through the amber lens the figures are engaged in quite different activities. Some are piling earth on other people, their half-buried arms taking the place of growing crops. One group of shepherds, which appeared to be herding pigs, are changing shape, becoming pig-like animals themselves. On the tapestry of winter, a group of figures huddled around a fire instead appear to be venerating a great, burning figure, a pyre into which the watching figures eagerly throw themselves.

As they are searching the farmstead, the Characters eventually hear the door slam shut behind them, and the smell of smoke

starts to permeate the room. The front door has been barred, leaving only two small windows by which to exit — one to the front, the other to the side of the house. Outside the side window, hidden from view, is Anselm Buchberger, the executioner. He has been sent to recover the lens, and has taken it upon himself to deal with the meddlesome Characters.

If an Average sized Character attempts to squeeze through the side window, have them make an **Average (+20) Athletics Test**. Small Characters pass this Test automatically. Failure indicates that the Character becomes momentarily stuck. Anselm attacks the first Character through the window — if they are stuck, they count as having the *Prone* condition, granting Anselm +20 on his strike. He uses this to make a Called Shot on his unfortunate victim's head.





## Anselm Buchberger

Anselm is a large brute of a man, clean-shaven, broken nose, dark-brown eyes, and a grim face, a few teeth missing, and a gold ring in his right ear. He wears the trappings of his guild — sombre robes, leather gloves and boots, and an executioner's hood, which is pulled back when he is not on duty. He is not one for idle chatter, and is not inclined to speak, especially to those who endanger the cult. Grunting more than speaking, he attacks the Characters without hesitation, and without mercy.

It is a fight to the death, but if the Characters appear to struggle, the horseman may make an appearance and come to their aid — especially if someone has spent a Fate Point to avoid death during the scene.

If the Characters did not uncover Markolf's journal the previous night, Anselm is carrying it.

### ANSELM BUCHBERGER - EXECUTIONER (GOLD 1)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	56	28	47	42	43	47	39	25	45	24	16

**Traits:** Weapon (Great Axe) +10

**Skills:** Dodge 56, Melee (Two Handed) 63, Intimidate 67, Stealth (Rural) 56

**Talents:** Deadeye Shot, Furious Assault

**Trappings:** Great Axe, 1d10 silver coins, Gold fillings pulled from his victims' heads (1 GC)



## THE CULT

The Characters may have uncovered some evidence of a Cult at work in the town, but are unlikely to know quite how far it goes. Any accusations against the Reeve are met with ridicule, though the town is paranoid enough that accusations against other members may prove fruitful if evidence is provided or a mob is sufficiently riled up. Allow dedicated agitators some leeway here, but any mob raised will quickly get out of hand unless carefully managed — fear of the horseman is at a fever pitch, and panicking townsfolk may well decide to burn every stable in the area.

You may allow the Characters to proceed with these investigations, but most cult members are respected townsfolk, and unless the Characters themselves take drastic action, the cult is unlikely to be undone during the course of the day.

## THE WINDMILL

If the Characters head to the windmill due to uncovering the cults' notes, or simply because it has been looming over events for several scenes now, they notice as they approach that it appears to be turning in the wrong direction, against the pitch of its sails. It is an old rickety stone structure, the heavy wooden doors and windows chained and locked shut. The stone it is made of was hewn from local standing stones, and anyone who has seen one of these stones up close recognises this, as some of the engravings can still be seen on certain blocks. On close inspection, the chains and locks are clearly new, with the door in good repair compared to the rest of the building. Picking the locks requires **+3 SL** on an extended **Hard (-20) Lockpicking Test**. It is possible to brute force their way through with a good strong kick — a **Challenging (+0) Strength** or **Melee (Brawl) Test** does the trick.

The windmill is a mess of mouldering sacks of corn, dominated by the mechanical workings of the mill, and its large grinding stones. A **Hard (-20) Perception Test** reveals a mechanism that opens a hidden trap door in the floor. It leads down to the sanctum used by the cult. The chamber is dominated by a circle of runes around the centre, and there are all manner of potions scattered around the room. There is a workbench upon which are a number of pieces of glassware used for alchemy. More grisly is the collection of severed heads, including that of Friedwart, the horseman. All have had their mouths sewn shut. The energies from the leylines under the sanctum cause these decaying heads to stir, their eyes flutter, mouths beginning to murmur incomprehensibly through the stitches. If the Characters think to cut the stitches in the mouths, the heads become understandable, intoning the story of their death. Four are well preserved enough to be understood.



## TALKING HEADS

HEAD, OLDEST TO NEWEST	WHAT IT SAYS
Female, blonde	Cut me down, they did, as I travelled here from Ubersreik! A new start! They talk though, they talk of fertility and growth. What for me but death? What for poor Griselda?
Male, dark haired, no nose	'Drunk! I was hardly drunk, just tipsy. Seemed so nice, that Markolf. Talk of beer. I love a drink, do you have one? My lips are so parched, I can't remember the last time I...
Male, no ears	G...Great growth is coming, great change. The land will be remade, and all of Hallt shall tremble! I am the fuel, the fertiliser. I...
Male (Friedwart)	For Ute! For Ute I died, and for Ute he'll kill! The whispering voice I hear at night, my secret brother. My arm is yours, brother, cleave who I could not.

Should the players cut all of the stitches, the heads will begin to speak in unison:

*'Witches watch, witches wait, green moon rises, the tricksters' fate. Flesh will burn, heads will roll, green moon rises, death to all. Horseman rides, horseman kills, jade moon rises, burn this mill!'*

## PART 5: HEXENSNACHT

Night falls across the land, and only Morrslieb rises above the mountains and forests, casting a chill light, causing the winds of magic to blow strong and the dead to stir. It's as if the viridian light could snuff out the town's candles, and lamps. The doors to homes are shut fast, and locals wrap themselves tightly in bed, fearful of what evil stalks the land. The snow falls and the layer of whiteness is stained by the tainted light of the green moon.

## THE GRAND PLAN

On this auspicious night, the first of a new year, the cult will attempt to perform its ritual. They believe it will bring fertility to the land, but in fact a terrible Chaos Spawn will emerge from their summoning, bringing death rather than life to the land. By 'killing' Hauptfehlt, the horseman, the cultists set their cause back significantly. Now, fewer in number and all the more desperate, the misguided, merciless cultists of the Council of Vicissitude gather to bring forth horror into the world.

As many cultists as survived the day's events meet at the windmill, there to perform their ritual, drinking of the unholy alchemical potion they have brewed. They are eager to channel the magical energies needed to complete the ritual. For this act, they have acquired a new sacrifice — the final one required to complete their work.

## SPRINGING A TRAP

If the Characters have determined that the windmill is the location of the cult activities, the Characters have a chance to plan an ambush. Alternatively, the Characters may have suspicions regarding some of the cult members, and notice them all simultaneously slipping away that evening. Following a cultist to the windmill requires a contested **Stealth Test**, but with the benefit of darkness **Stealth (+10)**.

If the Characters do not have a clue about the ritual or the cult, late at night they hear the horseman's hooves as he gallops past the town, and rides to strike down the last of the cult. A pumpkin spewing yellow luminous smoke leaves a trail in the horseman's wake. Gismondo comes upon the cobbler, Linde Schenk, late to the ritual. He cries out as he is slain and the town's alarms are sounded, alerting the cultists in the windmill, but also allowing the Characters to catch a glimpse of the Gismondo, riding toward the windmill.

## THE WINDMILL

Arriving at the windmill after the cultists reveals a familiar scene — a body, that of Linde Schenk, decapitated, with his right hand removed. The windmill stands at the top of the hill, silhouetted against the moon Morrslieb, and from within comes a flickering lantern light.



Characters arriving early can sneak into the windmill, and witness the ritual taking place or disrupt it before it can begin. The cultists, if allowed, will imbibe their potions as the Reeve leads the ritual, standing at the centre of the circle of runes carved into the stone floor, the foul incantations clearly twisting reality. If it has not already occurred, the dying cobbler's screams in the background draws the falconer, Diomira Kiefer, away from the chamber, exiting the windmill to confront whomever they find.

Overhead, as the ritual reaches its climax, the stars and moons wheel until all is dark, and only Morrslieb hangs full and large in the sky, coating the land with an inky-green light. Unaware of what potions they have been drinking, the cultists collapse screaming in pain, their bodies turning into writhing matter which crawls and undulates, coalescing together to form a being of writhing tentacles, chattering teeth, and a multitude of blinking eyes — a spawn of chaos. This is the final showdown, and if the Characters are lucky they might have Gismondo on their side to fight this beast.

If the Characters arrive late, a fight between the horseman and the cult will be taking place, as Gismondo wrestles a cultist, before witnessing all the cultists drop to the ground in pain, as the transformation in the chaos spawn begins. If the Characters arrive too late, they find that the Chaos Spawn has already formed, and the horseman is dying from injuries made by the creature. He cries out to Ute to forgive him for failing her, but will be coherent enough to point the Characters in the direction of the creature.

If at this point the Characters have figured out that the horseman is, in fact, not the enemy but an ally, upon arrival at the windmill they can aid him in gaining access to the windmill, potentially even preventing the ritual from being completed.

## THAT LOOKS KIND OF DANGEROUS

What if the Characters fail to challenge the cultists at the windmill? This is entirely predictable, of course. The horseman, outmatched and ultimately only a man, is slain, and his body added to the ritual's human fuel. This results in a Chaos Spawn forming, all the crops for a hundred miles failing, and the town of Hallt being briefly exposed to the raw stuff of Chaos itself. Everyone within a mile of the town gains 3 Corruption Points, and for the remainder of the night is spent fending off Daemons, Undead, and any other foul abomination you wish to throw at the party.





## Diomira Kiefer

Diomira is a grim-faced woman, clad in dark leathers, and a cloak with a hood that she wears up to obscure her features. She bears scars on her face from when she was once attacked by a hunting bird, and wears many tokens of her hunts, such as feathers and teeth. Her face is grimy and her matted hair is tied back into a crude ponytail. When she speaks she has a gravelly tone, her voice better suited to the hushed words she speaks when hunting and commanding her falcons.

### DIOMIRA KIEFER – FALCONER (BRASS 4)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	31	58	39	43	34	24	43	27	32	23	18

**Traits:** Armour 2 (6), Weapon (Dagger) +3, Ranged (Bow) +4

**Skills:** Animal Care 35, Animal Training 55, Charm Animal 39, Dodge 51, Melee (Basic) 42, Ranged (Bow) 63, Set Trap 48, Stealth (Rural) 36

**Talents:** Fast Shot, Hardy, Marksman, Trapper

### VERMINBANE, DIOMIRA'S FALCON A SLEEK, BEAUTIFUL, BUT CRUEL EYED PREDATOR

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
2	25	-	15	25	40	10	-	15	30	10	7

**Traits:** Size (Small), Weapon (Claw) +4, Bestial, Fly 100, Skittish, Trained (Broken, Home, War, Magic)

## Ewald Auffarth

Ewald is a rugged man, with taught muscles, and a square jaw furnished with an unruly beard. His dust-caked clothing is simple and hard-wearing, with a simple metal pendant that bears the emblem of the Masonic Guild. He has already started to bald, and he is often seen smoking a pipe.

### EWALD AUFFARTH – MASON (SILVER 1)

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	24	22	48	41	32	27	51	32	24	37	14

**Traits:** Weapon (Hammer) +8

**Skills:** Cool 36, Consume Alcohol 58, Dodge 65, Endurance 63, Melee (Basic) 35, Trade (Mason) 46

**Talents:** Craftsman (Mason), Strong Back, Very Strong

## Chaos Spawn

The spawn is a mound of writhing flesh, chattering teeth, blinking eyes, and tentacles, all of which are moving and twisting.

### CHAOS SPAWN

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Agi	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	65	-	42	56	23	24	27	-	-	-	56

**Traits:** Armour 5 (10), Bestial, Bite +7, Corruption (Moderate), Fear 2, Immunity to Psychology, Painless, Size (Enormous), 4 Tentacles +5

**Note:** The Chaos Spawn has 4 free attacks — one for each tentacle. Successful hits may entangle the target. Once entangled, the creature may spend one Advantage to make a Bite attack against all creatures it has currently entangled. These attacks do not generate further Advantage.

**Size:** Remember that the Chaos Spawn's Enormous size means that it will inflict Terror 2 on most average Characters, and Terror 3 on Halflings. Additionally, its damage will be doubled against average Characters, and tripled against Halflings.







## CONCLUSION: FATE IS LIKE A RIVER

If the players slay the beast, or prevent its final summoning, the corpse of the spawn sizzles and boils away. Morrslieb drops below the horizon and the sun rises. The night of foul witchcraft is over. However, it is clear that the cult has been polluting food and drink with the flux inducing chemicals of Tzeentch. But to what end? Why have no other mass mutations occurred in the Reikwald? Or is it more a matter of when?

With the cult revealed, the Characters may be hailed as heroes, and if the horseman lives, he thanks them and rides off to finally retire far from those who would harm him — that is, if the Characters are fine with letting a mutant go unmolested. If they do allow him to leave, he turns to them one last time before he goes, saying:

*'Of stranger folk I've not heard tell, you who wish this monster well. Glad I am I killed you not, though gladder still her killers rot. Ute would not approve of what we've done, but she is dead and I am gone. I can ask no more of thee, nor have I gold, as you can see. Take good care upon the road, and recall to Hallt a Horseman rode.'*

If they request his axe, he tosses it their way, and says, before departing:

*'I took it up and vengeance found, but leave that axe upon the ground. Friedwart is dead, and Ute too, but you, poor soul, have life in you. That axe has supped enough I fear — you would do well to leave it here.'*

If, however, they fail or flee, the Chaos Spawn storms into the town, and those it ensnares are also turned into more churning flesh to add to its own. (See **That Looks Kind of Dangerous** on page 21 for more.) If you wish, perhaps the Spawn absorbs enough people to allow a true daemon to finally take form within this horrific shell of corpulent flesh, providing an antagonist for the Characters to face later in their adventures.

## XP REWARDS FOR USING YOUR HEAD:

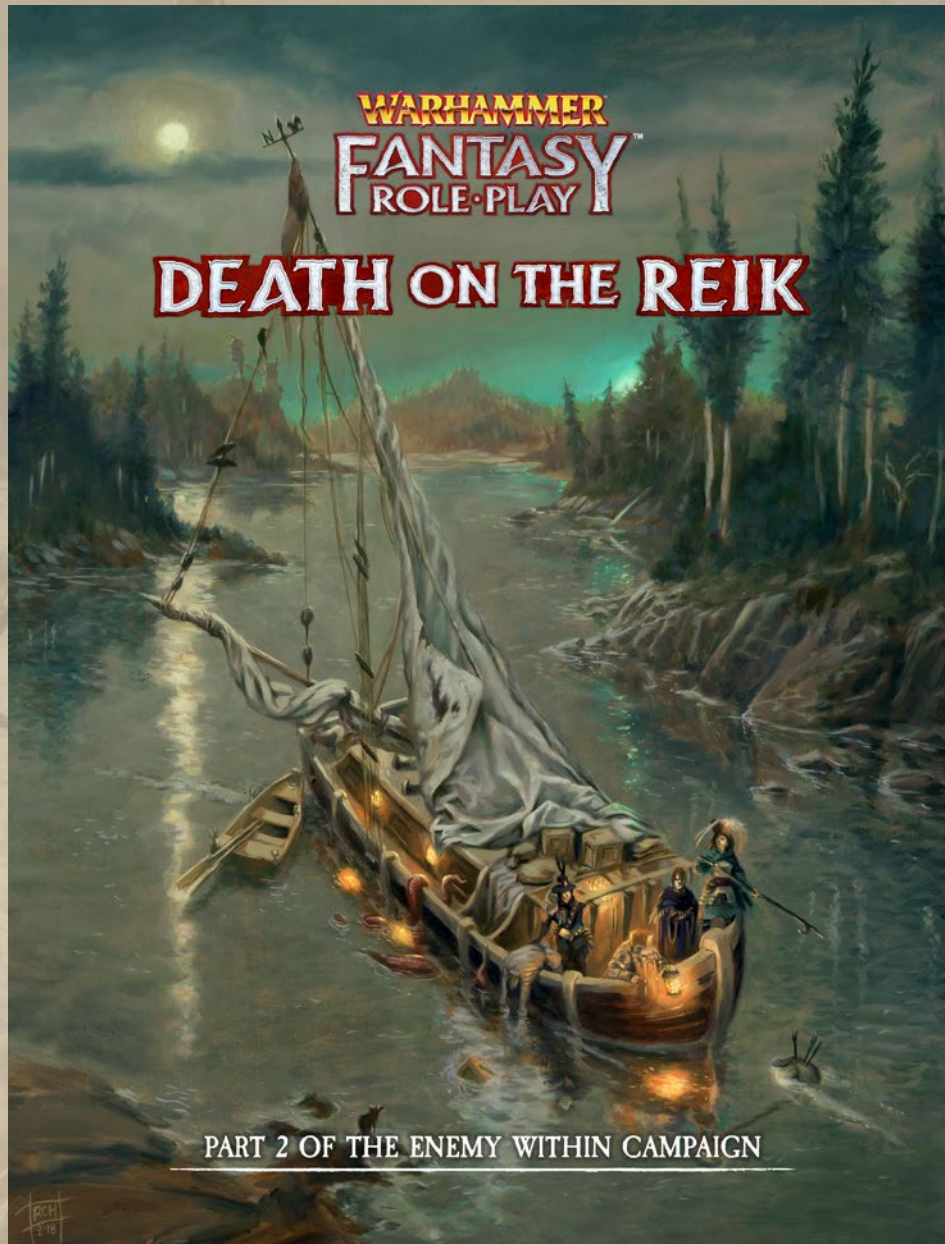
As well as the usual rewards for good roleplaying, players should receive the below rewards.

- ☠ 25 points for having a spooky time
- ☠ 25 points for stopping the Cult before the Chaos Spawn makes an appearance
- ☠ 25 points for actively participating in capturing the horseman before he kills again
- ☠ 15 points for actively participating in capturing the horseman without causing any harm to him or anyone else
- ☠ 10 points for taking direct action to stop the Reeve
- ☠ 10 points for restoring peace and calm in Hallt
- ☠ 5 points for taking Hel, the horseman's warhorse, should the horseman die



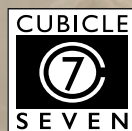


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