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FANTASY
ROLE-PLAY

OLD WORLD ADVENTURES



◆ SOMETHING KNOCKING ◆

CREDITS

Design & Writing: Robin Low

Illustration: Ralph Horsley, Josef Kucera,
Roena I. Rosenberger, Sam Manley and Scott Purdy

Graphic Design & Layout: Rachael Macken

Cartography: Safary Levente

Editing: Chris Walz

Managing Editor: Síne Quinn

Developer: Dave Allen

Proof Reader: Tim Gray

WFRP4 Producer: Pádraig Murphy

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SOMETHING KNOCKING

◆ INTRODUCTION ◆



Adventure Summary

Over the last seven years a stretch of river has been subject to mysterious pirate attacks. Boats are found drifting, stripped of cargo and crew, only signs of violence remaining. Despite patrols and several investigations, local riverwardens have failed to discover the cause. In fact, a large party of wardens has vanished recently, the deck of their drifting vessel found awash with blood.

A cult of river pirates led by Meinard Links, a devout follower of Khaine, are behind these attacks. Links possesses the enchanted skull of the infamous pirate captain, Bloody Klaas. The skull's dark magic renders their island home and ship magically obscured, keeping them safe from discovery. All the murderous death in the area has caused concentrations of *Shyish* and *Dhar* to gather and stagnate, leaving many souls unable to move on. These linger in the area as Undead creatures. The same magic casts a pall of concealing darkness about the pirates' hideaway, and prevents the Undead from exacting their own vengeance.

One night, the Characters hear a knocking on the hull of their boat. They must identify the Undead source of the noise and find a way to communicate with the vengeful entities. With a line of communication established and mutual trust in place, the Characters are asked to find the pirates' island and bring them to justice. The Undead offer to help, but first the Characters must get to the heart of the pirate's settlement and destroy the cursed skull, leaving them trapped and surrounded by murderous pirates. Can they stave off the pirates long enough for their Undead allies to reach them before it is too late?

Getting Started

This scenario benefits from foreshadowing. Rumours and passing encounters taking place during earlier adventures help establish the mysterious disappearances and offer ideas on how to interact with the Undead. Ideas to help the GM are described in **Foreshadowing**.

Entry points into the scenario are varied, although you should choose a stretch of river that is fairly well-travelled yet relatively remote from larger settlements. The Characters could be familiar with the region and its reputation (from previous adventures or foreshadowing), but equally it could be quite new to them. It's probably best if they are boat owners themselves, as persuading others to pursue the adventure might be challenging (though fun for some groups). They might be professional riverwardens or have been hired to investigate the problem by local authorities. It's even conceivable the Characters are river pirates themselves, though ones who operate through cunning and honest thievery, or want to secure a hideaway for themselves.

Foreshadowing

There are two kinds of foreshadowing: rumours and events. If **Something Knocking** is used as a side-adventure within a larger campaign, such as **Death on the Reik**, there is ample opportunity to slip them in here and there earlier in the campaign. Save some for this scenario in case the Characters go seeking clues or folk wisdom after first hearing the knocking. Alternatively, if you are playing the scenario as a one-off, one of the events can be used to introduce the adventure.



TALES FROM THE RIVER BANK – RUMOURS

Riverfolk love ghost stories as much as anyone, and many are willing to share their own experiences if prompted. Most are superstitious and believe in ghosts, but some prefer mundane explanations for any experience. Talking about the knocking or the supernatural in general leads to ghostly tales, some suggesting ways to communicate with the dead, the etiquette of interaction, and the risks and possible benefits of doing so.

If the Characters are part of a larger campaign, it would be good to have them hear some of these rumours during the sessions leading up to this adventure. These rumours could be interspersed with ones from your main campaign, and picked up whenever the Characters stop at a town, riverside inn, or meet fellow travellers on the Reik.

If you are playing the adventure as a standalone, this information could be imparted by people encountered as part of the events. It is particularly important to prime the party with knowledge that the ghosts of the river can be communicated with.

- ☠ *'It's a bad river for disappearances. We find the boats drifting or caught up, but nobody on board — just blood and robbed holds. Sometimes even stoves and furniture are gone. A wedding boat full of nobles vanished last year — a whole minor house just gone! Strigany, too, and probably more than we know about, since they're none-too fond of us. You find the occasional mutilated body we can link to a particular boat, but mostly people just disappear. Been going on six, maybe seven years and no sign of the culprits. You'd think it was ghosts!'* (Told by a riverwarden)
- ☠ *'Used to be an island in the river where they buried the dead, so they say. Kept bodies safe from wolves, see? Don't know if it was upstream or downstream. Vanished, see? River fog swallowed it up one night, and it ain't never been seen since. Proper spooky! When did this happen? Only a half dozen or so years ago. You ask around, you can find people who tied up there.'* (Told by an old herbalist)
- ☠ *'Yes, I remember an island in the river. I tied up there one misty day and had a look round. Rough ground, little chapel of Morr in the middle, and old gravestones. Don't think it was still in use. Thing is, I've been up and down that stretch and it's just not there now. Maybe I'm muddled in my old age. Maybe it was a phantom. Maybe I'm thinking of another river.'* (Told by a bargeswain from Marienburg)
- ☠ *'You don't want to tie up at the bend by the willows on that stretch of the river. Not at night, no-ways. Something not right in the water. You hear things there. What sort of things? Not rightly sure. Never tied up there myself. Not at night, no-ways.'* (Told by a young fisher)
- ☠ *'Knocking on your hull? It's driftwood. Or sleeping Reik turtles. Don't you mind any o'that ghosts nonsense. No such thing. I saw a walking corpse one, though. Should never have married him in the first place!'* (Told by a scorned boatwright)
- ☠ *'Have you heard it, too? The knocking on your hull below the water? It's drowned children, you know? Trying to find their mothers. Poor little mites. Light a candle for them.'* (Told by a young, cowled hedge witch)
- ☠ *'You ever see glowing lights in the water, not on it, deep down in it, you steer clear, right? Ghosts they are, river ghosts. Get too close and they'll pull you down with them!'* (Told by an orphan)
- ☠ *'Ghosts are one thing. It's the bodies you got to watch for! Bloating and hungry! Clambering over the gunwales with leeches all over their pale skin. Eels for tongues!'* (Muttered by a washed up drunk)
- ☠ *'Lots of ghosts in the river. Drownings, accidents, murders. Then there's the Janni Verdtfang and the Naiads. Won't come aboard though, not unless you invite them. Just stay out of the water. Wouldn't even trust rowboats. That's where they'll get you.'* (Told by a Halfling cook)
- ☠ *'One knock for "yes", two knocks for "no". Three knocks for "don't know". You can use a flame in a closed lamp, too, just watch for flickers. One flicker for "yes"...'* (Told by a fortune teller, for a few pennies)
- ☠ *'Oh, ghosts can get aboard, even if you don't invite them. Can't get you though, you'll just hear slow footsteps and creaking boards. Sometimes you'll see wet footprints on the decks. You have to invite them aboard if you want to talk to them, so they say.'* (Told by an unlicensed 'physician')
- ☠ *'You invite them aboard, they're guests and have to behave. There are rules, see? Mind you, there's a lot of argument over what the rules actually are...'* (Told by a Strigany trader)





EVENT: THE ABANDONED PATROL BOAT

The Characters discover a drifting boat, clearly a riverwarden vessel. There are no signs of life aboard, but gobbets of congealed blood are spattered about on the deck. A log book reveals the vessel's home port (a coat of arms on the cover helps the illiterate), which ought to be a destination large enough to support its own river patrol (if you are playing **Death on the Reik**, Altdorf's Reik River Patrol Terminal is the most likely home port). The log contains details of an ongoing investigation into the disappearances of river craft on this stretch of water.

The book is stained with blood and water, and most of the entries are illegible, but a recent one reads: *'Knocking was heard again last night. We spoke with a travelling trader today who claimed that she and her family often hear it, too. She insisted that the noises were made by the spirits of the drowned. She said that there might be ways to talk to these spirits using Morrite rituals or contraptions, but hasn't the skill to do so herself. I pray to Morr that he take these unquiet dead before I ever have to speak with them!'*

Towing the boat back to its home port yields the Characters a finder's fee of 5 gold crowns. This makes a good scenario entry point: whether immediately or at a future date, a senior riverwarden asks the Characters to discreetly investigate the stretch of river where other boats have been found drifting, sharing with them details from the logbook if they cannot read.

EVENT: THE TRAVELLING SHAMAN

An unusual battle cry alerts the Characters to a conflict along the river. They spy a tall, lean man in a rowboat fighting for his life against some aquatic beast, such as a Bog Octopus. Assuming they come to his aid and drive the beast off, they become the friends of a boatman named Yevgeni Dostal. He hails from the far-off marches of Kislev. Yevgeni has the habit of referring to folk from the Empire as *chegan*. A Character who passes a **Hard (-20) Language (Kislevite)** Test understands that Steppe Nomads use this term to describe 'worthless people' they take offence, he laughs and treats them to a hearty slap on the back. Despite this habit, Yevgeni is friendly and appreciative of the Characters for providing him with assistance. If asked why he is so far from home, he explains his tribe's shaman Dafa told him he had things to do in this far land. As well as being a mighty warrior, he tells them, he was also an apprentice shaman and can commune with the spirits.

This encounter can be run before this scenario, with Yevgeni going his own way afterwards. The Characters can track him down later. Alternatively, it can take place early in this scenario.





Yevgeni Dostal

This tall, lean boatman hails from the vast grassy plains that stretch out to the northeast of Kislev. He is proud of his achievements: A fine horseman! A great warrior! Apprentice to the great shaman Dafa! Oh, and the tales of his adventurous travels!

Why is he here, of all places? Dafa told Yevgeni he had things to do here, so he came. These things were many and varied: *'Fight the fish that flies'*, *'Listen for noisy water'*, and *'Make friends! Our lands may need chegan someday'* and similarly odd ideas.

Many folk can find Yevgeni rather loud and irritating, yet miss him when he's gone. Besides having a strong arm, he has some understanding of spirits and the dead. Culturally, he is more tolerant of ghosts, wary but less fearful.

Yevgeni offers some extra muscle and insights into the spirit world — rumours regarding communicating with ghosts could come from him, although he will phrase them in somewhat broken Reikspiel, insists on the term *'vaiduk'* rather than 'ghost', and has no knowledge of Morrite ritual.

YEVGENI DOSTAL

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	35	30	42	35	35	40	35	30	30	40	12

Traits: Armour (Leather Jack) 1, Weapon (Bow) +6, Weapon (Sabre) +8, Weapon (Spear) +8

Skills: Animal Care 35, Athletics 48, Charm 48, Charm Animal 33, Consume Alcohol 37, Dodge 47, Endurance 42, Gossip 44, Haggle 43, Intuition 40, Language (Battle 32, Reikspiel 35), Melee (Basic 45, Polearm 37), Lore (Kislev 33, Magic 38, Steppe Nomads 45, Undead 48), Outdoor Survival 37, Perception 37, Ranged (Bow) 35, Ride (Horse) 55, Row 48, Swim 49

Talents: Fisherman, Gregarious, Rough Rider, Second Sight, Strider (Marshes), Strong Swimmer

Trappings: Bow, Covered Row Boat, Leather Jack, Sabre, Spear



Part One: Something Knocking.

The scenario begins at night. The Characters have tied up their vessel on the banks of a lonely stretch of river, the nearest fishing village half a day away. They may be aware of the area's reputation, but the alternative is travelling in the dark (if they choose to keep sailing, they will still soon hear the knocking).

At a time when at least some Characters are asleep, have everyone make a **Perception (Hearing)** Test. For those below deck, the Test is **Easy (+40)** if they are awake or **Average (+20)** if they are asleep. For anyone on deck, perhaps keeping watch, the Test is **Difficult (-10)**, unless they've fallen asleep, in which case it is **Hard (-20)**. If everyone fails, allow another Test an hour later. Those who succeed hear a distinct tapping or knocking on the hull. Those on deck hear it echoing up from below. Its pattern changes from regular and continuous to random and without pattern. One Character (pick at random) might swear they think it sometimes sounds like a tune they can't remember the name of.

If the Characters do not perceive the knocking, or ignore it, you have a couple of options.

Firstly, if you are running the scenario as part of a larger campaign, the Characters can simply go on their way, but the knocking occurs again whenever they pass this stretch of river. It is louder and more desperate each time, making Perception Tests made to hear it increasingly easy.

Alternatively, if and Characters continue to ignore the knocking and you wish to force the issue, it becomes so insistent that a board in the hull is loosened and the boat springs a leak. Detailed rules for damaging vessels are given in the **Death on the Reik Companion** (see pages 29–30), but here is a summary of the main points:

- ☠ The leaking vessel sinks in a number of minutes equal to its Toughness (so 45 minutes for a typical barge).
- ☠ Characters can busy themselves bailing out water, which doubles the time it takes the boat to sink.
- ☠ Every 20 minutes, the Characters can make a **Trade (Boatbuilding)** or **Trade (Carpentry)** Test to fix the leak. Seeing as the Undead have only caused a small hole, the difficulty is **Easy (+40)**.
- ☠ This action is intended to inconvenience the Characters rather than deprive them of their barge. There are many bays and mudbanks along this stretch of river, so if the barge does succumb to the leak, it would be better to beach it rather than have it go under.

From time to time the knocking changes where it is coming from. The Characters first hear it one side, then on the other, sometimes from the fore of the vessel, sometimes the aft.

Sometimes it comes from the very bottom of the hull. If the boat is still travelling, the knocking follows them. What is clear in all cases is that whatever is knocking is doing so from *below* the waterline.

Those with *Second Sight* notice a slight, wispy presence of *Shyish* in the atmosphere close to the walls of the hull. If they go up on deck to look overboard, they see its darkly swirling presence in the water close to the hull. Looking out over the river, they see points of *Shyish* very loosely scattered in the water some distance from the boat, but surrounding them, like violet stars.

What exactly happens next depends on the Characters. If they actively engage with the knocking, you can proceed to **Conversations with the Undead**. If they ignore it, don't know what to do, or otherwise fail in any attempt at communication, the knocking eventually stops (it stops at sunrise, even if the Characters are still trying to communicate). The knocking happens again the following night at the same time, and the night after that. If you are faced with these interludes, give the Characters the opportunity to encounter NPCs who they can talk to about their experiences (see **Foreshadowing**). If the Characters are reluctant to talk, let the NPCs do the talking — the Characters are not the only people to have heard the knocking.

Conversations with the Undead

Probably the most likely thing the Characters do is knock back. If they do, whatever is knocking responds to their tapping, mimicking it. It may be fun to do this in real life. However, this is unlikely to result in proper conversation.

The next thing Characters might try is talking to the knocking. They quickly discover whatever is outside the hull can hear them. From here it's a simple step to *one-knock-for-yes-two-knocks-for-no*. If the Characters have heard one of the rumours described in **Foreshadowing**, they may decide to try using a lamp flame in a similar way. What information this yields depends on the questions, as it is limited to yes or no answers — '*Who are you?*' cannot be answered this way.

Any Character who has been part of the cult of Morr as a Nun, Priest, or Warrior Priest, or any Character who passes an **Easy (+40) Lore (Religion)** or **Challenging (+0) Lore (Empire)** Test has heard of a ritual known as a Morr Dial. The Dial consists of an array of letters, numbers, and the words 'yes' and 'no' inscribed in a circle on a flat surface, with an upturned drinking vessel placed in the centre. For many, this is considered necromancy, however, Morr Dials are one of several methods used by the cult of Morr to communicate with restless spirits and are not strictly illegal. The Characters can create a large one up on deck or a smaller one on a floor or table below. As they start to use it, the temperature drops and the Characters can see their breath. Frost forms on metal surfaces. This happens regardless of the season.

Whatever methods the Characters try, communication comes to an end at sunrise and can only resume again the following midnight.

Questions and Answers

Here are some questions Characters are likely to ask and the answers they get. Questions without yes-or-no answers are met with silence (or no flicker of a flame). The response in brackets indicates the letters a Morr Dial spells out, if the Characters use one.

1. Who are you?

Silence. (We are the dead.)

2. Are you Ghosts?

Yes. (Some of us.)

3. What do you want?

Silence. (May we come aboard?)

4. Are you responsible for the disappearances?

No. (We are the disappeared.)

5. Will you harm us?

No. (No. We give you our word.)

Permission to Come Aboard

The immediate aim of the Undead is to get permission to come aboard. They want to talk clearly, face-to-face, and establish trust. They won't force their way aboard — that would be an act of piracy, something they are victims of.

If the Characters use a Morr Dial, the Undead eventually ask directly to be allowed aboard. If the Characters run out of questions, the Undead ask again. If the Characters repeatedly ignore or refuse the request, or if they fail to get beyond yes-and-no questioning, the Undead have to become more direct and manifest. However, they do this beyond the boundaries of the boat (after all, Ghosts don't need a surface to stand on).

Whether on the vessel's decks or off its gunwales over the water, two **Ghosts** (WFRP, page 331) manifest themselves, growing out of swirls of mist. The first is a young woman in a beautiful flowing dress, glowing a deep aquamarine tinged with silver; she looks like a bride. Drops of aquamarine light drip from the edges of her dress. Her silvery hair is loose and gently waving all around her as though underwater. The second is an altogether different creature, swirling thick and oily, blackly brown against the night, manlike in cloak and hood, with the occasional rainbow flash of oil on water.

Characters who succeed on an **Average (+20) Intuition** Test sense that the first Ghost radiates sadness and honesty. The latter, a slightly sinister playfulness (somehow directed at the Characters) and active malevolence (somehow not aimed at them). Both radiate cold and, for those with *Second Sight*, a pall of *Shyish*.

The bride identifies herself first, naming herself Klara von Holgau. With an oily chuckle, the other entity says, '*Call me Shade. Sounds appropriate!*'

'We are murdered and we are not alone.'

At this point, in ones and twos, another dozen ghostly beings flare into light around the boat, but at a distance intended to avoid intimidation. Colours, shapes, and details vary, but the Ghosts had strong personalities in life, so there's always something notable about them. Some wear the colourful shawls of Strigany traders, others the buff uniforms of the Reik River Patrol.

At this point, the Characters should make a **Challenging (+0) Perception** Test. Those who succeed immediately notice things bobbing in the dark water. They appear to be heavy, bloated bodies or thin skeletonised ones, others halfway between. They shine under the ghostly light. Then (if the Characters had previously given permission to come aboard), either side of the two Ghosts, bony talons clasp the sides of the vessel and haul their weed-dripping bones aboard. They shake like dogs, rattling inside their rotten clothes, then reach toward the gunwales and rap their bony knuckles, *knock... knock... knock*.

Now, at any point from the Ghosts' arrival onwards, frightened, paranoid, or naturally aggressive Characters may attack. Some Characters may harbour a *Hatred* (WFRP, page 190) towards the Undead and must make a **Challenging (+0) Cool** Test to resist the urge. This is fine — the Undead simply retreat, withdrawing to a safe distance. The **River Zombies** (see page 11) are slower (though still Move 4), but do not engage if attacked. If the Zombies are destroyed, the remaining Undead do not hold a grudge. They understand what they are, but they have unfinished business and need help. They wait patiently for the Characters to compose themselves and reconsider their actions. However, if the Characters are having none of it, sunrise sees them depart, and they do not come knocking again.



SO, THEY DIDN'T BITE

If the Characters want nothing to do with the Undead, this is not the end of the adventure. The easiest way to proceed is to wait a while and have the pirates attack them. The crew of the *Spectral Kaye* (see page 14) is large enough (a score or so of vicious, experienced cutthroats) to take them alive. Then, it's off to the hidden island as future sacrifices to Khaine, and hopefully a daring escape.

More subtle approaches are possible. They could be hired by the Imperial River Service to investigate the disappearances — the promise of coin is a powerful incentive. They might meet a priest of Morr who is investigating rumours of local Undead or has found records of the chapel on the island, but just can't seem to find it. Alternatively, make it personal: when some friends or allies of the Characters go missing, perhaps it's time for them to go cap-in-hand to the Ghosts...

Further Conversations with the Undead

If the Characters are ready to listen, Klara von Holgau and Shade explain what's going on. You could read-out the following or use it as a guide for a conversation between the Characters and Ghosts. Encourage the latter, as it's player led, allowing them to take the adventure forward.

Klara: *'We are all victims of murder. Most were folk who lived on the water, fisherfolk, traders, and Strigany. Some travelled to visit friends and relatives. Even riverwardens investigating our disappearance. A few were kidnapped from towns and villages to be killed. Rich and poor alike. All of us now lie in the mud of the river, hiding from the light.'*

Shade: *'She talks as though we were all undeserving of our fate. Some of those merchants were cheats and swindlers. And I never met a riverwarden who couldn't be bribed.'*

Klara: *'Those who killed us are worse than mere thieves. They are murderers and sadists. Even those of us who surrendered were taken prisoner to be murdered later, sacrificed to... something. Don't ask us what, though. Dark God or Daemon, we do not know, it is hidden to us. We only remember knives and skulls.'*

'The pirates dwell on an island existing only for them and the Dead, hidden from the living by Dark Magic. However, while we can see the island, the Darkness holding us here prevents us crossing its boundaries. A similar Darkness hides their ship from the Living and prevents us boarding.'

Shade: *'If we could, we would have dealt with our killers ourselves. Oh, yes, we would have taken our revenge with great glee! Even her gentle ladyship here would have smiled!'*

Klara: *'There is something evil in the Darkness at the heart of the island. We are certain that if it is destroyed, we can cross the island's edge. Then we can demonstrate to our killers the kind of mercy they showed us.'*

Shade: *'She means we'll tear their hearts from their chests and devour them. Mmmm. Tasty! Don't be so shocked. The so-called justice of the Living is oft as blindly cruel but less oft so clearly deserved.'*

Klara: *'We need your help. We cannot cross onto the island, but can help you see it as we do. We believe the Living who can see it can step upon its shores, just as our murderers do. We beseech you: travel to the heart of the Darkness and destroy what is within. Or carry it beyond the island's boundaries; perhaps that will be enough. With its destruction, we are free to come to your aid... and take our vengeance.'*

Shade: *'To help you see, we need only touch your eyes. It should not hurt, but your lids must be open. Then, as the sun passes below the horizon, you can see what is hidden from the Living.'*

If the Characters ask for more personal information about Klara and Shade, refer to their descriptions below. Klara is quite open, while Shade pretends to be evasive in order to fit its sinister image (though in truth, Shade is not so sure of its own history).





Klara von Holgau

As a minor noble, Klara had a comfortable, undemanding life. Her greatest joy was her forthcoming marriage to another minor noble she had truly fallen in love with. They would have a comfortable, undemanding life together, and their children would have equally happy lives. And then, before the ceremony took place, something smashed into her wedding barge. People carrying knives and swords appeared out of nowhere and lay about them yelling and screaming. Guests and family fell to the decks with gaping bloody wounds. There was blood and screaming and crying. As Klara looked around desperately for her betrothed, she was suddenly overwhelmed by pain and darkness.

When she next became aware of anything, she was a Ghost. But she can't remember her fiancé's name. She was not a cruel or angry person in life, but the loss of a name has left a focus of tightly coiled hate deep inside what remains of her in death.

It is Klara who has organised the Undead, breaking through their mindless hate, helping them reshape it into a goal — she was a noblewoman after all. Organising others is what nobles do. But now she needs the help of the Living and it's time to go knocking.

KLARA VON HOLGAUR

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	30	—	30	30	30	30	20	30	30	30	12

Traits: Dark Vision, Ethereal, Fear 2, Fury, Hatred (Pirates), Undead, Unstable, Weapon +6



Shade

Shade has no idea who they were in life. But they don't plan on letting anyone know that. Keep them guessing. Keep them on edge. A little scared. Maybe a lot.

Shade has a teasing and sinister personality. One minute they have a cool edginess, like they *really* know the score. A minute later, they're creeping you out. *'I'm not that bad, though'*, Shade assures you. *'But don't get between me and my vengeance.'*

SHADE

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	30	—	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	12

Traits: Dark Vision, Ethereal, Fear 2, Fury, Hatred (Pirates), Undead, Unstable, Weapon +6

The Other Ghosts

The ghostly mob are people who had lives, who had goals. Families, friends. Enemies, even! *'I was somebody, damn it!'* They can't remember it all, but they know they had things to do and people they cared about. But now the dark river is all there is. And a darker island with borders closed to them. Maybe if they could have revenge on their killers, maybe that would be enough. They hope so.

THE OTHER GHOSTS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
6	40	—	30	30	10	30	20	15	15	—	50

Traits: Dark Vision, Ethereal, Fear 2, Fury, Hatred (Pirates), Swarm, Undead, Unstable, Weapon +6



RIVER ZOMBIES AND SKELETONS

These Undead are water-bloated corpses with fish-eaten eyes. Bodies that have shed a lot of weight, just ragged clothes and brown rotting flesh hanging off bones. Skeletons wearing only the muck and weed of the riverbed. There's not much left going on inside their heads, but they understand the purpose Klara has given them. And they are very, *very* angry.

RIVER ZOMBIES

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	15	-	30	30	5	10	15	10	-	-	12

Traits: Construct, Dark Vision, Distracting, Fear 2, Painless, Undead, Unstable, Weapon +7

SKELETONS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	25	25	30	30	20	20	25	10	-	-	12

Traits: Armour 2, Construct, Dark Vision, Fear 2, Painless, Undead, Unstable, Weapon +7

Deadsight

To see the hidden island, the Characters must be touched by the dead. Specifically, one of the Ghosts must place an ethereal fingertip on the bare eyeballs of at least one Character. It is not a painful process, but it is an unnerving experience and requires a **Challenging (+0) Cool Test** to keep the eyelids open. Anyone who fails can try again after a few minutes, but a second failure means the Character is disturbed and suffers from the *Rattled* Condition (see box). If they fail again, they'll never find the courage. As long as just one Character has Deadsight, this is not a problem. If none succeed, the Ghosts suggest finding a braver person to ally with (**Yevgeni Dostal**, for example, who automatically succeeds on the Test).

For the purposes of this scenario, with the coming of dusk, Deadsight allows the Characters to see the hidden island, enabling them to cross its boundary. It's a kind of *Second Sight*, limited to *Shyish* and *Dhar*. The additional ability to see in the dark is a possibility, although this spoils the atmosphere and risk of exploring a mysterious shadowy island in the dead of night.

Any Character without Deadsight cannot see the island. However, like the victims of the pirates, they can be physically hauled across the boundary by those who can. This requires only a tight grip, but provides an additional complication if clambering up the slippery rocky sides. Once on the island, they can see as well as anyone else on a dark night.

RATTLED CONDITION

This is a new Condition intended to be used in circumstances where Characters have faced a disturbing phenomenon, but not one that is so clearly threatening so as to leave them *Broken*.

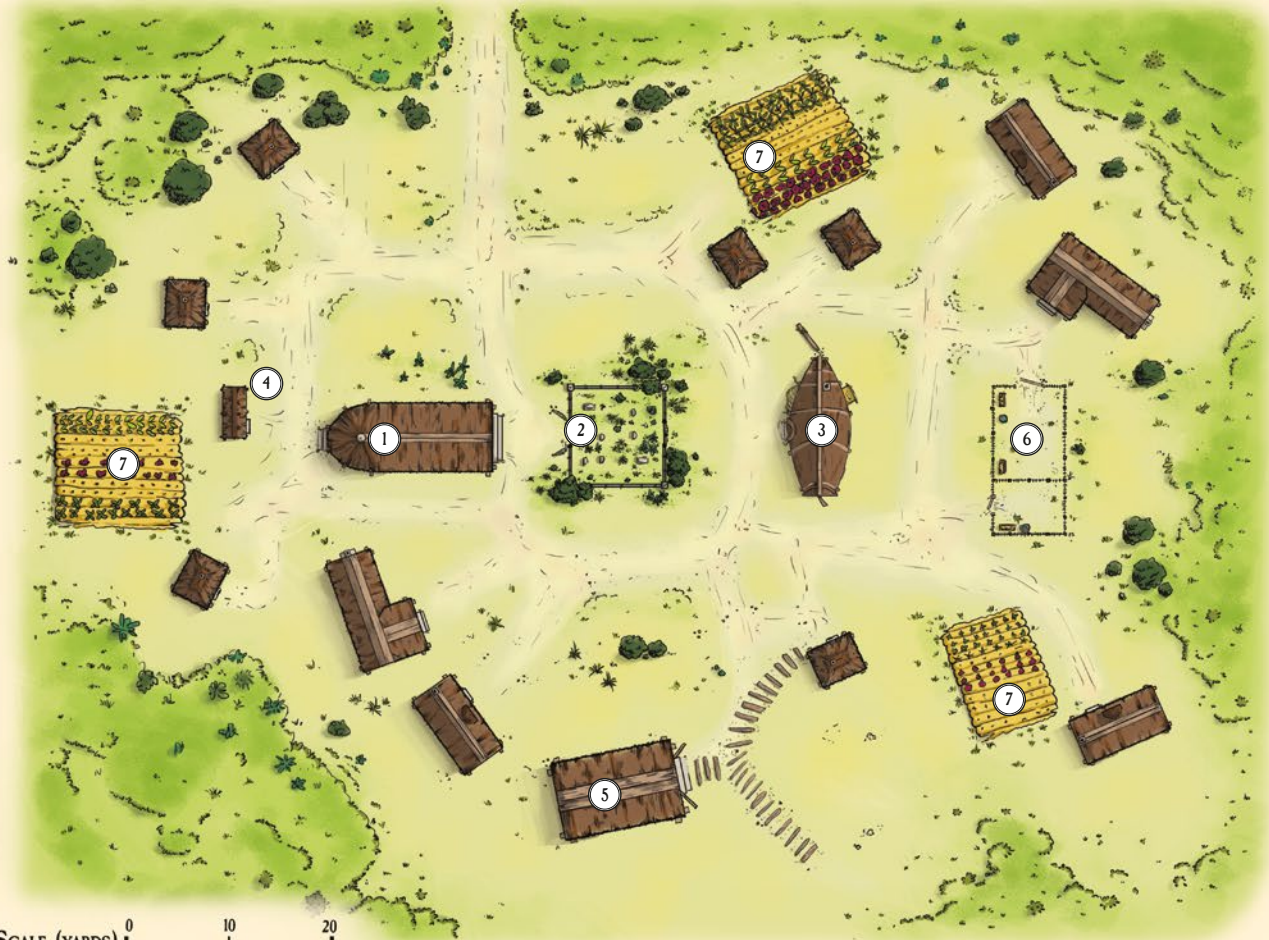
A Character gains this Condition when they fail a Cool Test in an ominous environment or worrying circumstance. A Character might also become *Rattled* after being intimidated. A Character who is *Rattled* gains +10 to Perception Tests as they pay additional attention to every creaking floorboard and looming shadow, but all other Tests are at a -10 penalty as they find it hard to concentrate. This Condition does not stack: you are either *Rattled* or you're not. The Condition is removed if the Character gains a *Broken* Condition, or once the disturbing phenomena passes. If the disturbing presence lingers for a long time, the Character can take an **Average (+20) Cool Test** to remove the Condition every half hour.

Any Skill, spell, or other effect that can remove *Broken* Conditions also removes the *Rattled* Condition.

The power of Deadsight vanishes with the final passing of the Undead (even if Shade decides to linger on a while...).

Characters with *Second Sight* may be able to perceive the island too, though the more specific Deadsight is clearer. Any relevant Tests made with *Second Sight* alone should be more difficult by two steps.








SCALE (YARDS) 0 10 20



SCALE (YARDS) 0 100 200

- ① Chapel of Khaine
- ② Garden of Morr
- ③ Meinard's Cabin
- ④ Lock-up
- ⑤ Stores
- ⑥ Goat Pen
- ⑦ Vegetable Patch

-  Bramble Patch
-  Goose Nest
-  Pirate Patrol



To the Island

Once they have a guide to the island, the Characters still have to travel to it. When dawn comes, the Undead depart and the Characters must find it for themselves or at least its general area, as their Deadsight won't help until dusk falls. The Characters likely have a rough idea where the island is from the Ghosts (even if it's only upstream or downstream; details often elude the Undead), but may have picked up helpful rumours of a vanished island during earlier investigations. Alternatively, the Characters could spend the next day asking questions and chasing down rumours to help them find the right area (perhaps a **Hard (-20) Gossip** Test to meet an old fisherman who provides an actual landmark on an adjacent riverbank, *'I recall a rocky outcropping with a wind-bent old tree on top'*). They may also want to do some preparation for their coming adventure, so provide a convenient village or chance meeting with a river trader so they can do some shopping.

If you want to add some other events to the journey, here are some ideas:

- ☠ **The pirates have struck again!** The Characters find a small vessel floating in the river. Nobody is aboard, just signs of robbery and bloodshed. You could link this to the three captives in the pirates' lock-up (see page 15).
- ☠ **It's a body!** The body of a young man lies floating face down in the water. If turned over, there is a single, exceptionally clean stab wound to the heart. It looks like the body's been in the water for a few days, and his face and chest wound have been nibbled by fish.
- ☠ **What was that?** The Characters' vessel is suddenly subjected to a sudden buffeting in the water. Looking to see what has caused it, they spot the wake of another vessel racing away from them... but there's no vessel! The invisible source of the wake very swiftly heads away, leaving the Characters with just the muffled sounds of raucous laughter. They have just had a close encounter with the pirates and the *Spectral Kaye*.

Once in the general area of the hidden island, and once darkness has fallen, Characters with Deadsight can see the island. What catches their eye is not so much the island, but the darkly glowing fog of *Dbar* coiling threateningly around it, shot through with violet streaks and flashes of *Shyish*. Now they can see it and know it's there, the magic that has shifted it out of reality no longer affects them. It is time to cross the boundary.

The Skull of Bloody Klaas

Thirty years ago, Klaas Vissier, or Bloody Klaas as he was known, was a murderous pirate terrorising the Reikland's rivers. His cruel piracy was finally curtailed in a river battle that saw Klaas taken alive while his vicious crew were slaughtered to a man. Klaas was found guilty after a swift trial and hung from his battered ship's mast. Klaas's body was left hanging overnight. In the morning, it was found on the deck, but without its head! This tale is still told on the river and in the port where it happened, with much gruesome speculation.

As a notorious killer, Klaas and his trial attracted the attention of a devotee of Khaine, the God of Murder. Under cover of darkness, the priest cut Klaas's body down and removed the head. After boiling off the flesh and scraping out the brains, prayer, ceremony and Khaine's divine will turned the murderous pirate's skull into a darkly enchanted object.

The skull has the power to conceal a murderer's hideout — a location with clear boundaries (the walls of a room or building, or as in this scenario the edges of a small island) that have been drizzled with the blood of a murder victim, by the murderer. The detached mandible has similar though weaker properties. The magic renders the location invisible and allows no sound to emerge from it. It does this by subtly shifting the location out of reality and filling in the gap with natural surroundings so nobody can accidentally wander into it, which is why no boats have crashed into an invisible island in the middle of the river.

In the thirty years since Bloody Klaas's hanging, the skull has passed through a succession of bloody hands. The current owner, Meinard Links, has demonstrated considerable ambition, successfully murdering enough people to a gorily consecrate the edges of the island his pirates use as their base. His crew, all having contributed to the ritual and regularly reinforcing it, enjoy its blessing, too.

The skull currently sits on the altar of a defiled chapel of Morr on the island. However, its mandible is detached and is inside a chest on the *Spectral Kaye*. As long as the rest of the skull is intact, the jawbone provides similar benefits to the bloodily consecrated boat. The difference is that it doesn't shift the boat out of reality the way the skull does the island — it *is* possible to bump into the boat and hear voices from on board, although they sound muffled and distant. If the skull is destroyed, the jawbone's magic is greatly weakened (the skull is not affected if the jawbone is destroyed).



The jawbone alone makes the bearer invisible, but not silent (breathing, sneezing and so can be heard by Characters who pass a **Very Hard (-30) Perception (Hearing) Test**). Also, to grant invisibility, the jawbone must be anointed with 1 Wound equivalent of blood, taken from the victim of a murder. Its power of invisibility comes into effect only between the next dusk and dawn. Come dawn, it must be anointed again to be of use. Additionally, it is a cursed item and if not anointed at least once a month, the owner becomes subject to the *Animosity* (Everyone) Psychology (**WFRP**, page 190). The only way to break this curse is for the owner to destroy the jawbone.

Part Two: Onto the Island

The island lair of the river pirates is an oval plateau some 600 yards in length in line with the river by 400 yards. Its rocky sides make it easy to tie on to, but rise steeply, two yards and higher in places. The rock is slick with weed and water, requiring a **Difficult (-10) Climb Test** to avoid slipping and falling in the water (see **WFRP**, page 166 for more on falling). Once ashore, the ground is extremely uneven, with mossy hollows and grassy hummocks where the Characters (or pirates) can hide. There are large areas covered with brambles and rank weeds, with scattered thickets, branches twisted and dripping with moss. It is night when the Characters visit the island, and even with their Deadsight, shadows are deep and dark. It is a creepy place, stained with blood and suffering. There is the taste of rust in the damp air.

If the Characters take the time to sail around the island, they eventually discover the pirates' boat, the *Spectral Kaye*, secured fore and aft by sturdy ropes to metal staples in the rock. Adjacent are a series of stepped rocks. While slippery, they offer a safer path onto the island.

The *Spectral Kaye*

The pirate's ship is equivalent to a Patrol Boat (for details of Patrol Boats, see **Death on the Reik Companion**, page 35). It is an ordinary example of its type, the only notable features being the bloodstained gunwales. Inside the captain's cabin there is a small wooden chest. It is not locked, and inside, wrapped in red velvet, is the jawbone from the skull of Bloody Klaas. If the jawbone is destroyed, Meinard Links immediately wakes up. He is aware something is wrong, but not exactly what. He quickly dresses and goes to the chapel of Khaine, where he sits and contemplates the skull for the rest of the night. Sooner or later, the Characters will disturb Links' meditations, but how it plays out depends on how the Characters go about their explorations.

Encounters and Hazards on the Island

The pirates are confident in their security and do not post watches or patrol the island. This allows Characters considerable freedom of movement — only bad luck or shocking incompetence should alert the pirates to their presence. Bad luck and other hazards may come in the form of:

- ☠ An insomniac pirate taking a stroll or perhaps encountered answering a call of nature over the edge of the island. A **Challenging (+0) Stealth Test** is required to avoid attracting her attention.
- ☠ A wild goose that lets rip with a loud honking if disturbed by a Character who fails an **Easy (+40) Stealth Test** whilst passing by her nest. This wakes a pirate, who decides to go shut the annoying bird up.
- ☠ A Character stumbles into a rocky hollow (pass a **Challenging (+0) Agility Test** to avoid falling and suffering 1d10 + 1 point of Damage)
- ☠ A Character catches an exposed area of skin on some nasty brambles (pass a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test** to avoid crying out; pirates get a collective **Perception (Hearing) Test**, difficulty based on how close the Characters are).
- ☠ There is a population of wild goats on the island, and the Characters suffer an encounter with a territorial ram. Goats' screams can sound horribly human; while the pirates are used to them, a protracted fight or a screaming retreating animal might provoke the interest of a pirate or three.

Pick two of these when the Characters are first exploring the island, saving the others for environmental complications in any chase sequences later in the adventure.

THE PIRATE SETTLEMENT

Meinard Links and his pirates have been here for several years and have built themselves a surprisingly comfortable home. Various buildings have been constructed, mostly from the broken-up boats they have attacked. Although the pirates steal most of what they need, Meinard Links encourages self-sufficiency to limit the need for excursions to civilisation, so there are also vegetable plots, two stores, and a goat pen. The chapel of Khaine is at the heart of the settlement.

Pirate Cabins

Loosely scattered around the chapel of Khaine are small huts and cabins the pirates have built for themselves over the years. Some live alone, others as couples or smaller groups. Most have stoves and other furnishings looted from boats they've attacked. The pirates don't live in luxury, but certainly in more comfort than they deserve. Most of the cabins have vegetable patches alongside them and some have a still for making vegetable spirits. Doors tend to be unlocked, although some have simple bars on the inside.



If the Characters start investigating the cabins, they could reveal their presence. **Hard (-20)** or even **Very Hard (-30)** **Stealth** Tests are needed to enter any cabin without disturbing the inhabitants. Similarly, even if they manage to silence them before they cry out, attempts to search cabins for loot require a **Challenging (+0) Stealth** Test to avoid making a sound. However, other pirates are not likely to take an interest unless they hear multiple failures.

Any money or valuables in the cabins is for the GM to decide. However, in Meinard Links' cabin there are three items of interest: a jewelled Dagger worth 3 GCs, a collection of high-quality butcher's knives, and Links' heavy leather diary, a detailed collection of atrocities.

The Lock-Up

The pirates keep a lock-up — a windowless log cabin — for sacrificial captives. The door is secured with a hefty wooden bar, which is easily removed from the outside. The lock-up is not guarded.

It has three occupants, two women and a man, dirty and bloodied, their clothes as worn and ragged as they are. They are weak and need assistance. If they become aware of the Characters, they immediately cry out for help and, if not immediately reassured, attract the attention of a pirate 3 Rounds later. Depending on the season, it is cold or stuffy inside. If the Characters end up inside the lock-up, they require a cunning plan to escape.

Stores

There are two sturdy sheds where stolen goods are kept. One is for food and the other for items useful to the pirates such as tools and clothing, alongside saleable goods. Each is guarded by a quartermaster, who bars themselves in and sleeps inside. When a quartermaster leaves, they padlock the doors.

The Goat Pen

A dozen goats are kept in a high-fenced pen, with a ram kept adjacent but separate. The pirates use them for milk and meat. They take an interest if Characters come close, suddenly rearing up, resting their hooves on the pen bars, and bleating at them. Some Characters might be startled (an **Easy (+40) Cool** Test to suppress a surprised cry).

Graveyard

The rotting remains of wooden fencing surrounds an area beyond the chapel's exit: a Garden of Morr. It was a simple affair, with a few wooden and fewer stone markers now lost within a tangle of grass and bramble. Anyone making a rather prickly search of the Garden finds a single standard black rose tree, struggling in the tall weeds.

The Garden is old and untended. As followers of Khaine, the pirates tend to avoid it if they can. They make do with pitching their own dead into the river.

The Chapel

At the heart of the island lies the stone chapel. Formerly of Morr, it is now dedicated to Khaine. Even from some distance away, anyone with *Second Sight* can see *Shyish* and *Dhar* gathered churning around it, carrying a sense of sweaty terror. The building is kept in fair condition despite its spiritual corruption; the stone is crumbling and the few Morrite carvings defaced, but the wood-tiled roof keeps the rain out. Roughly 10 yards long by 6 yards wide, it has a doorway at either end (an entrance symbolising entry into the world, an exit symbolising death). Both doorways have been desecrated with the addition of wooden doors, which are barred on the inside during sacrifices. Its windows, placed just above Human head-height, are boarded up, although there are gaps which can be peered through. The inside is simple: an open space with a central altar. The once-plain walls are now blood-stained and hung with rusty old daggers and swords. Grimy skulls dug up from the graveyard are scattered about. At night, it is dimly illuminated by four very large black candles in brass candleholders at each corner of the altar. The candlelight just about stretches to the walls, around which are chairs and stools used by the pirates during worship.

The altar is the dominant feature within the chapel. It is a solid rough-carved block of dark grey stone, large enough to bear a sizable coffin. The image of a raven carved on its surface has been defaced and crudely replaced with scratched and painted symbols of Khaine (mostly daggers, but also skulls and horned heads).

On top of the altar, nestled upon a crumpled heap of crushed red velvet, is the Skull of Bloody Klaas. When the Characters first come close, under the flickering light of the candles it appears





horribly like the skull is perspiring, but it is only condensation (although if anyone dares wipe the moisture with their finger and taste it, perhaps it *is* a little salty...). The mandible is missing; if the Characters haven't already found it, the jawbone is on *The Spectral Kaye* (see page 14).

Those granted Deadsight can sense the 'Darkness' the Ghosts spoke of, coiled like a snake around the skull. Anyone with the *Second Sight* Talent sees a shockingly intense concentration of *Dhar* within the skull with no need of a Test. It is difficult for someone with *Second Sight* to look at it for too long.

Upon entering the chapel for the first time, the Characters should make an **Average (+20) Cool** Test or receive the *Rattled* Condition (see page 11).

Encountering Meinard Links

GMs might want the Characters to formally meet the main villain of the scenario, Meinard Links, rather than just encounter him during a final battle scene. It is suggested in **The**

Spectral Kaye that Links is woken if the mandible of Bloody Klaas is destroyed, after which he goes to the chapel of Khaine and meditates on the skull. This is an obvious opportunity for a meeting, and GMs could place Links in the chapel regardless of what happens with the mandible. Unless the Characters are exceptionally careful in their approach and entry to the chapel, Links can raise the alarm even if he cannot get out and evade the Characters. This leads to a situation similar to destroying the skull in the chapel and the ensuing scream. The difference is the presence of Links.

Links is a bargaining chip, and he can order his pirates to hold back. Links is egotistical, happy to tell the Characters about himself and everything he's achieved, and tries to tease out information about the Characters. He's also quick with a knife (even if disarmed, Daggers and Swords are all over the walls), though he won't risk it unless he can either easily take a Character hostage or the skull is threatened. Links is completely unaware of the Undead, but if the Characters make him aware, he is very disturbed by the news, although he tries to hide it.





THE VILLAIN, FLUSSKAPITÄN MEINARD LINKS

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
5	42	35	35	40	51	52	40	48	34	47	14

Traits: Armour (Leather Jerkin 1), Cunning, Fast, Weapon (Large Dagger) +6, Weapon (Throwing Knives) +5

Skills: Athletics 56, Charm 52, Cool 37, Consume Alcohol 40, Dodge 58, Endurance 44, Entertain (Speeches) 49, Gossip 51, Heal 49, Language (Battle) 50, Leadership 52, Lore (Reikland 51, Theology 55), Melee (Basic) 62, Outdoor Survival 54, Pray 48, Ranged (Throwing) 55, Row 41, Swim 39

Talents: Bless, Coolheaded, Dual Wielder, Fisherman, Flee!, Inspiring, Savvy, Sixth Sense, Strider (Marshes), Strong Swimmer

Trappings: Large Knives, Throwing Knives, Jewelled Dagger, Leather Jerkin, Diary

Blessings: Blessing of Battle, Blessing of Courage, Blessing of Finesse, Blessing of Grace, Blessing of Savagery, Blessing of Wit

The Villain, Flussskapitän Meinard Links

Meinard Links believes he is the son of Bloody Klaas. This may or may not be true: his mother, a riverwoman, told him so during an angry exchange in his youth. She became his first victim, the first of many more. Murder, as Links discovered, is very easy along the river and a good way to make a living if one is careful. And Links has been careful. The only person to discover him was someone with an advantage — a priest of Khaine searching for new followers for his god. Previously only a killer for commercial reasons, Links found Khaine's priest offered him something he didn't realise he was missing: divine meaning. That and the skull of Bloody Klaas. The priest's death was only a matter of time; after all, that was how he'd acquired the skull himself.

As a priest of Khaine, Links became ambitious: create a safe base, create a following. He tells his followers he is the son of Bloody Klaas, and if he dies, the power of the skull dies, discouraging knives in his back. Even Links is surprised at how solid his community of Khainites has become. He'll abandon any of them in an instant if he has to, but while they're useful to him, he's the best friend they have. The only things he's true to are himself and Khaine. He's quite fond of his knives, though.

Destroying the Skull

It should be clear to the Characters that it is the skull protecting the pirates and preventing the Undead coming onto the island, and that it must be destroyed. It's worth noting the mandible on *The Spectral Kaye* does not have to be destroyed as well (although the Characters might worry about it.) They may wonder how

destruction is best accomplished. In practical terms, it doesn't matter: smashed, covered in oil and burned, attacked with damaging spells, they'll all work. It could be carried and thrown off the edge of the island. Ultimately, it is down to the decision of the Characters. The longer they take to decide, however, the greater the chance the pirates become aware of their presence.

If the skull is physically destroyed, whether inside or outside the island's boundaries, it emits a soul-shattering shriek that lasts a full minute and alerts the pirates. The scream might be muffled if the skull is wrapped up, say inside the heap of crushed velvet it rests on, before it is damaged. Carrying the skull off the island and throwing it in the water beyond the island's blood-anointed edges is the only way to avoid the scream, but the time it takes to carry it to the edge only increases the chance the pirates become aware of the Characters or that the skull is missing. It also leaves the skull intact, and it may be recovered or found by a new owner.

If the skull is destroyed inside the chapel or near the pirates' cabins, its scream immediately wakes the pirates, even ones sleeping off a night of drinking. If the Characters have completely wrapped the skull in the velvet, there's a chance they've muffled it (the pirates get a **Very Easy (+60) Perception Test**). If it's destroyed elsewhere, the chance of the pirates hearing the scream decreases with distance from the pirate cabins. If the Characters make it to their own vessel, the pirates require a successful **Very Hard (-30) Perception Test** to hear, and if they muffle the skull, the pirates won't hear it at all.

Escaping from the Pirates

If the pirates are alerted while the Characters are on the island, they give chase and try to capture them. If the Characters are still inside the chapel, they have the chance to run while the pirates are still waking up. Alternatively, they can bar the doors and barricade themselves inside (the blades on the walls and the chairs can be used to wedge the doors or hamper the pirates' access through them; just remember there are *two* doors). In this situation, the Characters are hopelessly outnumbered, but there's a chance they can hold the pirates off long enough for the Undead to arrive and even the odds. This could entail a battle on two fronts as pirates assail both doorways. The Characters could also play for time by engaging the pirates and their leader in negotiation. The pirates are happy to talk, as they believe they hold all the cards, being entirely unaware of the very angry Undead heading their way if the skull is destroyed.

Alternatively, the Characters may decide to run for it, leading to a running battle as they race to get off the island. The pirates are initially tired and confused, so the Characters need not be immediately overwhelmed. If the Characters are already elsewhere on the island when they destroy the skull, they have a head start on the pirates, who are unsure exactly where the Characters are. The scream will have given them some idea, but an order to spread out is given by Meinard Links, thinning the pirate outs. However, if a group of pirates catch up with the Characters, their cries of battle draw in more and the Characters become increasingly hard pressed.

The Characters might decide to split up or a stealthy Character could trick the pirates into following them and then attempt to hide. The Characters might all try to hunker down in a group of trees or behind a rocky outcrop. It's important to allow the players to come up with ideas to escape or play for time and let them try. Emphasise that time is of the essence, though. If the Players get stuck in lengthy discussions, have a small group of pirates spot the Characters to spur them into action.

Another option is surrender. This sounds risky, but the pirates are cultists of Khaine and prefer to kill in cold blood, rather than the heat of battle. If they can take the Characters prisoner, they will, stripping them of weapons and possessions before roughly throwing them into the lock-up. If the Characters have destroyed the skull, this is not a bad situation as the Undead are on their way. If they have not destroyed the skull, then they'll have to escape. The pirates take time to search the island in case there are other intruders, but eventually return to make some sacrifices to their bloody-handed god. The Characters' time is short. (If you have previously introduced Yevgeni Dostal and he wasn't already with the Characters, he could come to their aid, having used his own shamanic means to discover the hidden island. Or, the Characters are not the only people the Undead have successfully persuaded to help them.)

The Pirates

Sadists and murderers, drawn to the shining darkness that is Meinard Links. There is little good to say about them. There are 20 to 30 of them.

THE PIRATES

M	WS	BS	S	T	I	Ag	Dex	Int	WP	Fel	W
4	35	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	12

Traits: Armour (Leather Jack) 1, Weapon (Cutlass) +7

Skills: Athletics 37, Dodge 35, Endurance 37, Melee (Basic) 45, Perception 35, Row 45, Sail 38, Swim 42

Talents: Strong Back, Waterman 2

Trappings: Cutlass, Leather Jack

In Pursuit!

There are at least two opportunities for chases to happen: when the pirates hear the skull scream and if Meinard Links flees during the final battle. The following starting distances are suggestions based on the pirates being asleep in their cabins at the start of a pursuit. See **WFRP**, page 166 for more on running chases.

In the chapel: 2 (Characters are loosely surrounded by the pirates' cabins, so negative SLs may represent having to evade sleepy pirates as they emerge; or swap the Athletics Test for a Strength Test to shove the pirates aside).

Outskirts of pirate settlement: 4 (negative SLs may represent environmental complications, such as those in **Encounters and Hazards on the Island** (page 14); or the hazard increases the difficulty of the test).

Out of sight of the settlement: 8 (pirates must succeed in a **Challenging (+0) Perception (Hearing)** Test to work out which direction the scream came from, otherwise they spread out to search).

Meinard Links' head-start depends on whether or not the Characters have kept an eye out for him. If they have, then the starting distance is only 2, otherwise it is 4.



A Ghastly Cavalry

Hopefully, the Undead arrive to take their revenge before the Characters are overwhelmed. First to arrive are the Ghosts, howling through the mist. Klara and Shade come individually, the rest together as a Swarm. Assuming the subsequent action happens around the settlement, this takes about 8 Turns. The water-bloated River Zombies and weed-clad Skeletons follow, silently shambling from the shadows of the trees, bringing unfinished business and great anger. They arrive about 12 Turns after the skull is destroyed, with more arriving over the next 6 Turns (due to the oval shape of the island). The Undead arrive sooner if the action happens closer to the island's edge.

How the Characters experience this and how soon depends on where they are at the time: they could be barricaded in the chapel and fighting or playing for time, stripped of their possessions and crammed into the lock-up, somewhere on the island, on their boat or even the *Spectral Kaye*. If they successfully made it off the island with the skull without the pirates knowing, the Characters can join the Undead in their final act of revenge or they may decide they have no wish to witness the slaughter.

If they stay involved, let the Characters fight their own skirmishes, occasionally aiding individual Undead and vice versa, but assume the pirates are eventually overwhelmed. Remember the chaos of battle: screaming, the moon-lit darkness, feasting corpses, and the chill of an angry Ghost streaking past. You can break combat up by having some pirates surrender or lock themselves into their cabins. Another group, led by Meinard Links, can make a break for the *Spectral Kaye*. Giving each Character a chance to spot this (**Challenging (+0) Perception Test**) and give chase provides a more interesting challenge for the players than just mopping up the Undead's leftovers.

Good-byes

With the skull destroyed and the pirates slain, the Undead are free to depart, no longer bound to the river. The remaining River Zombies and Skeletons trudge to the island's edge, stumble into the river, and gradually vanish beneath the surface. As they go, some turn their heads to the Characters, giving a single jerky nod.

The Ghost Swarm performs a brightly multi-coloured circuit around the Characters. It flies up into the night sky, then down and through the entrance of the chapel of Morr, emerging from the exit, breaking apart and rapidly fading to the darkness.

Klara and Shade remain to speak to the Characters.

Klara: *'I will not stay long. I offer you my thanks. And for all of us. Now I must go and see if I can find my betrothed. I think his name was... well, I will find out. If you ever visit my home, place a flower for me.'*

With that, Klara drifts off slowly towards the river, gradually fading to a spark of turquoise light that suddenly blinks out.

Shade grins, perhaps. It's hard to tell.

Shade: *'Not too bad for a night's work! I'm feeling much better about everything now. Not so tied down, either. You know, I might just stick around for a bit. Have some fun. Had enough of this river, though. Time to see the sights! Never know, I might bump into you all again sometimes!'*

And with that, Shade zig-zags off into the distance and vanishes.

The Characters are alone on a dark island at night, surrounded by corpses.

A New Day

What next? Well, the Characters find themselves in the middle of an island with the makings of a functional village. It's somewhat tainted by a history of murder, but aside from that it's just waiting for new residents. Perhaps the Characters wish to become landlords. Or maybe they just loot the stores, or even return some stolen items to their rightful owners.

The cult of Morr is likely to come looking for the Characters, whether they stay on the island or not. By rumour, instinct, or divine guidance, senior priests become aware something significant has happened. The cult wants to cleanse and reconsecrate the chapel and debrief the Characters. It can always find uses for people like them.

Maybe some of the pirates escaped the island: the Undead's vengeance need not have been total. If one of them was Meinard Links, there is *definitely* trouble ahead.

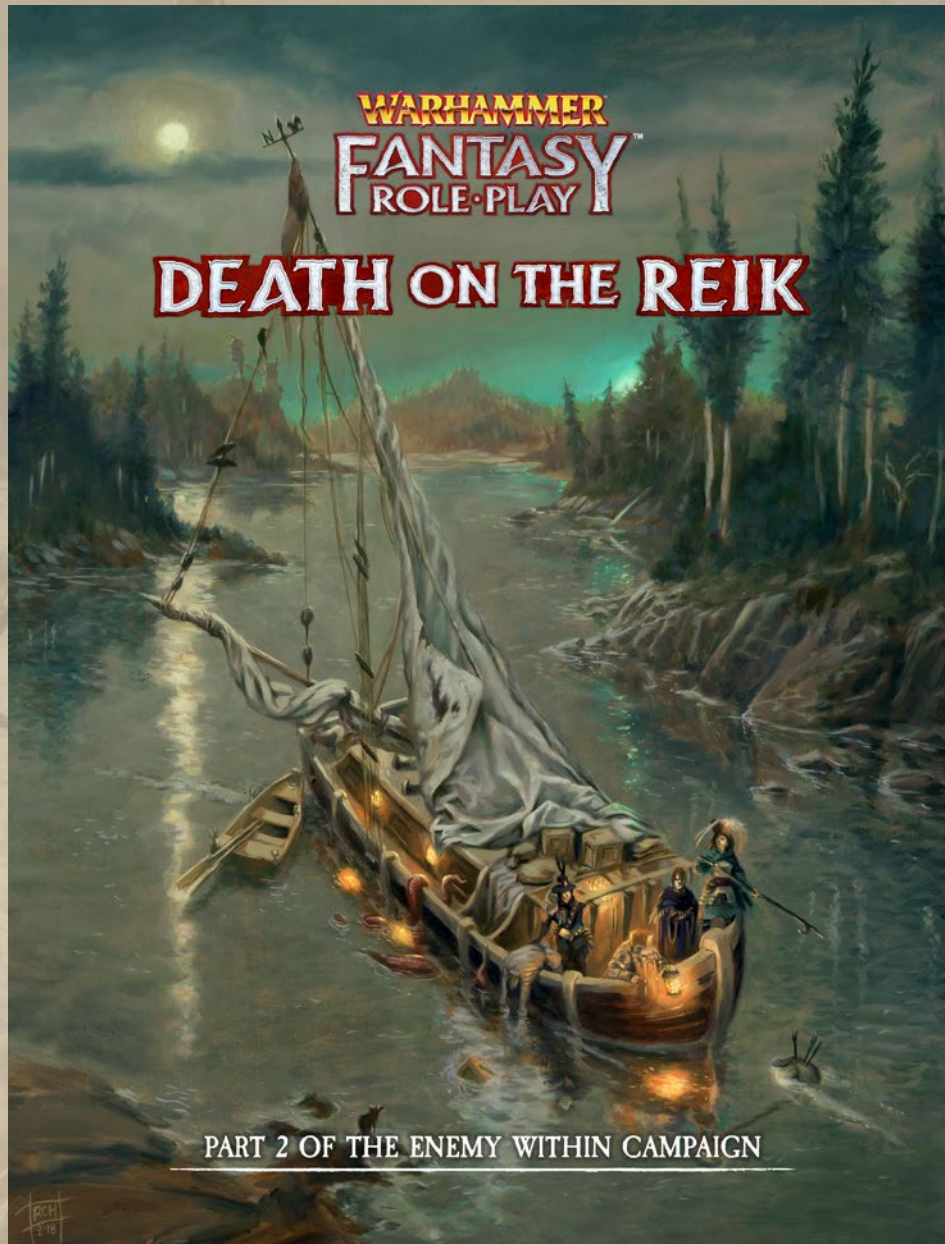
Awarding Experience

Rewards

As well as the normal XP you offer for good roleplay and having fun, you should apportion XP at the end of each session using the following guidelines:

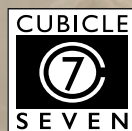
- ☠ 5 XP for any Character who figures out a way to ask questions of the spirits before the board the boat.
- ☠ 5 XP for allowing the spirits to come aboard.
- ☠ 10 XP for any Character who allows themselves to be touched by the dead and gain Deadsight.
- ☠ 15 XP for finding the Island
- ☠ 10 XP for boarding the *Spectral Kaye*
- ☠ 5 XP for finding the Skull of Blood Klaus
- ☠ 10 XP for destroying the skull
- ☠ 15 XP for defeating Meinard Links

LET THE EPIC ADVENTURE CONTINUE WITH...



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