

# Witch Hunters in the Empire

*Tireless foe of Chaos, dark magic and witchery of all kinds.*

*Even though sorcery has been officially sanctioned for over 200 years, the Empire forged by Sigmar remains a dangerous and fearful land for any suspected of witchcraft. Witch-Hunters roam the land searching for the few whose sorcerous abilities may mark them as potential agents of Chaos and consign them to the cleansing flame.*

Witch Hunters were codified by Magnus the Pious when he published the Articles of Imperial Wizardry in 2304. He charged this new order to work within the law (arrest yes but not judge, nor execute) but also opened entry to other major religions (Ulric, Verena & Morr) as well as non-Templars (RoS: pages 138-139).

A witch hunter's sworn duty is to protect Empire and its citizens from "Chaos, its allies and those who would serve it". More precisely their targets include:

- Unlicensed Magic Users (because they could use their magic against the state)
- Reformists (because their ideas are contrary to interests of the nobility)
- Mutants and the disabled (because they are a burden on their masters and carry the taint of chaos)
- Any religious faction that does not accept that Sigmar is a God (for obvious reasons)
- Any race or nation currently at war with the Empire.
- Any subversive individual
- Any rebellious faction that challenges the rule of the Nobility

Most controversial articles of Imperial wizardry is confiscation by witch hunter whom brought them to justice of property of anyone found to be guilty of consorting with forces of chaos

To become WH requires authorisation from senior priest of licensed cults.

## **Sanctioned**

Trained and sanctioned witch hunter may carry a writ that bears the seal of the Witch-Finder General. Bearing such a writ gives a witch hunter leave to investigate the taint of Chaos anywhere within the Empire and act upon it should he find it. By the wording of the writ, such a witch hunter answers only to the Witch-Finder General, who in turn answers only to the Emperor. In practise, of course, he must still abide by local authority...

## **In practice**

- Uniform of intimidation and fear; the wide-brimmed hat, buckled tunic & long black cloak.
- Be ready to "Sacrifice a Few for the Good of Many" but beware those who preach *Neca eos omnes. Deus suos agnoset* or "Kill them all. God will know His own."
- While we bear the power to arrest we are NOT judge, jury, nor executioner. We are bound to the laws of the land just like every other man.
- Ultimately we must be able to justify our acts before a court of law and, if necessary, pay for our crimes.
- The usual sentence is death by burning - the only way to destroy the corruption and purge the soul

- Able to call upon the services of local militia or watch as well as priests of sanctioned cults

### **The Six Holy Principles**

These are the original founding tenants of The Ancient Initiatic and Holy Order of the Templars of Sigmar, as recorded in Hieronymus Black's Rules & Statues:

1. Of obedience to the Lord Protector and renunciation of one's own will
2. Of the privilege to accuse, dispense judgement, declare anathema and excommunicate
3. How the brethren may cloth and equip themselves
4. How the brethren will maintain the secretive nature of the order
5. The installing of fear through the regular use of public executions and trials by ordeal
6. The suppression of mercy

### **Chapterhouses**

The Holy Order of Witch Fynders, as it is officially known, has a major Chapterhouse in each of the Empire's cities. Here witch hunters gather to report, train and pray together:

- Great (main) Chapterhouse in Altdorf ("within the square of the Cathedral of Sigmar")
- Northern Chapterhouse in Middenheim
- Southern Chapterhouse in Nuln
- Western Chapterhouse in Talabheim

The order is also rumoured to have also an abbey and a castle and their disposal but no-one dares reveal their locations.

## Ulrican Witch hunters

Despite the cult of Sigmar's historic hegemony, the cult of Ulric was among the first to respond to Magnus' invitation. No doubt keen to prove that it had no lessons to take from anyone when it comes to rooting out witches and other such evils, least of all their old rivals.

Known as Black Hunters, this small group (dozen Hunters & 1 Hunter General) are based out of the cult's centre of power, Middenheim.

In fact this small and secretive group have tracked sorcerers for centuries. Middenheim with its historic ties with wizards and as one of the focal points of the Wizards' War has long been a rich source of sorcery and other such heretical practices.

Their motto is *Certo Dirigo Ictu* (I Aim With a Sure Blow) and their symbol is a wolf holding a sword upwards. Apparently the wolf holds a sword rather than the more traditional, as the sword is universally considered to represent justice (often stylised as crosspiece in the scales).

The Black Hunters consider themselves very different from their Sigmarite counterparts and mark their distinction accordingly:

- no hand gones, just crossbow pistols
- no throwing knives, throwing axes instead
- no Holy Water, Relics nor Amulets, just the Cleansing Fire of the Eternal Flame (carried in an ornate storm lantern)

Although subterfuge is possible, it should be limited and penance must be undertaken immediately (Lord Ulric is unforgiving)

### Sin & Pennance (100 XP = *Theology*)

- Blasphemy = Cursing Ulric / Cursing wolves / Cursing cold or winter
  - Learning the principles by heart
  - Shaving off one's beard
  - 5 lashes across back
  - Barefoot run
- Minor transgression = Failing a fallen comrade / Suffering a defeat / Losing your blade / Using subterfuge
  - Barefoot pilgrimage
  - 20 lashes across back
  - Fight without a shield until the next full moon
- Major transgression = Slaying a wolf / Using a firearm / Refusing a challenge / Fleeing combat
  - Pilgrimage with only the defences provided by Taal (wooden club + furs)
  - Court martial:
    - Guilty - blade confiscation until next full moon
    - Innocent - public declaration of innocence

## Relationship with other ulricans

Within the cult's hierarchy the Black Hunters are viewed with a mixture of awe and suspicion. Despite their reputation of austerity they are respected by most but they're also expected to respect others. As such here a typical forms of address:

- Your eminence = Grand Theogonist Yorri XV of Altdorf
- Your holiness = Ar-Ulric of Middenheim
- Uncles
  - Ver-Ulric (Eric) Granholm of Salzenmund (Nordland)
  - Ver-Olrik (Vasily) Muhrun of Erengard
  - Or-Olrik of Kislev
  - Par-Olric of Olricstaad in Norsca
- Brothers = Venerable Wolves
- Cousins = Lone Wolves

## Other cults

Sigmarites have Officium Arbitrorum. Rumoured to harbour 2-3 score Witch Hunters (including Kasper Von Liebenstein, author of the Witch Hunter's Handbook), half dozen Witch Fynder General (Gustav Heidelmann) & Lord Protector (resides in Altdorf) Thaddeus Gamow (& his assistant Karin Schiller).

The other main contributor is the Church of Verena, usually volunteering a dozen Inquisitors.

## Witch Hunters in Middenheim

Currently the Northern Chapterhouse is home to a dozen witch hunters:

- Sergeant Kloser, Witch Fynder Captain, ex-White Wolf (soon to be Witch Hunter General of the North, i.e. Ostland, Ostermark, Hochland, Nordland and, at least technically, the other half of Middenland and the city-state of Middenheim)
- Sir Steinlager, ex-Knight Panther, works closely with both the Order of White Wolf and the Fiery Heart
- Herr (Theodore) Bruckner, ex-Judicial Champion, works in close collaboration with city guard
- Father (Matthias) Hoffer, ex-Grey Wolf, experienced within matters within ulrican clergy
- Herr (Maximillian) Obel, ex-Assassin, specialises in the lower classes
- *Father (Bernd) Küster, ex-Lone Wolf, works closely with local peasants, since gone rogue*
- *Herr (Tobias) Nacht, ex-Anointed Priest, Witch Hunter for Nordland, works closely with Sigmarite clergy (rode north last month with an impressive retinue)*
- Herr (Jakob) Neuhauser, ex-Warrior Priest, Witch Hunter for Ostland, often works with Dwarven community
- Herr (Ludwig) Scheer, ex-Exorcist, Witch Hunter for Middenheim, works with Wizards & Alchemists Guild
- *Inquisitor (Mikael) Feiler, ex-Solicitor, for Northern Empire (Nordland & Ostland), works closely with other clergies (not Ulric, nor Sigmar) but missing for 2 months*

- Inquisitor (Felix) Stark, ex-Investigator, for Upper Empire (Middenheim & Bergsborg), works closely with local judiciary, suspicious of Werner (but won't say much as he can't prove anything, yet...)
- *Lars Jevljaeger, Dwarven ex-lore-master who died suddenly 6 months ago in Erengard while uncovering corruption in Middenheim and Ostland*

At any one time there are usually no more than a handful (3-4?) at the Chapterhouse as many of the Witch Hunters are *absent on investigation*. Those in residence are usually busy reporting their recent investigations, researching future expeditions, training or recovering.

### Regarding Werner's aspirations

- Dissuade
  - "Perhaps the path of the Lone Wolf would better suit your current situation?"
  - After all the Witch Hunters are highly-secretive organisation who serve the interests of the Empire above all else.
  - They are ill-disposed upon those independent of mind and spirit...
  - They prefer those with years of service and impeccable credentials
  - I am confident that our cult can offer the support you need.
  - Later maybe when all this discord and suspicion has died down and your faith is stronger, the Witch Finders will call upon your services.
  - If you insist then I will do my utmost to arrange a private audience with one of their members.
  - But I warn you, it won't be quick, nor will it be easy.
- Apprenticeship
  - Learn the physical skills (well-versed?), spiritual discipline (initiated), and esoteric knowledge (uninitiated) needed to seek out and destroy Chaos.
- Trappings
  - Writ from the Witch-Finder General
  - Full plate
  - Crossbow pistol
  - Rope
  - Manacles
- Retinue
  - Take a man-at-arms (commoner) or squire (noble) as a retainer. Treat him not as your servant but as your right-hand man. Someone you can trust to watch your back and bear a heavy burden.
- Concedes
  - Knows a retired Witch hunter in Altdorf, Arno Wissenfeld
  - If Werner looks him up he discovers that Arno lives in recluse
  - No-one visits him since a message boy was killed a few months ago
  - Basically if Werner can get past the traps, he discovers a wild-eyed man dressed in chainmail who is obsessed with keeping "Stay away from me! Don't make me kill you! You're not going to get me!! I've seen things that shouldn't be seen. The end of days is coming. I tell you. I know you and the others think that I'm mad but I'm not I tell you... It's the truth. You have to believe me. You believe me don't you? Good but you can't leave now. Why? You'll never survive. They got Rudi. Fell down the stairs they said. Poor bugger. They didn't even finish him. Stuck in a hospice. Clever. They want me to visit him. No, I'll not fall into that trap!

- If Werner visits his old comrade he discovers that he too is disturbed. He believes that he was pushed. He doesn't want his liege to risk his life. Are you his apprentice? You'll need letters of introduction... go see Father Metzger he will test your application but if Herr Wissenfeld has seen fit to bestow you with his blessing you should be in with a chance...

### **Witch Hunters of Renown**

- Thaddeus Gamow, Lord Protector, terrifying zealot with deep hatred of wizards
- Ander Walden, soon to be Witch Hunter General East (Reikland, Wissenland and the city-states of Altdorf and Nuln, as well as a sizable portion of Middenland)
- Sforza Zerndorff, soon to be Witch Hunter General South (Averland, Stirland, the Moot, Talabecland and the city-state of Talabheim)
- Matthias Thulmann, grizzled (Sigmarite) Witch-Hunter
- Wilhelm von Backerheim, Inquisitor for Central Empire (Middenland & Talabecland)
- Matthias Krieger, Witch Hunter for the East (Ubersreik & Marienberg)
- Fabergus Heinzdork, Imperial Inquisitor (Altdorf & Reikland)
- Annika Bohringer, Inquisitor General (head Witch Hunter of Verena) of Altdorf
- Theophilus Habermaskeen, Inquisitor (Witch Hunter of Verena) of Altdorf
- Hieronymus Lang, Inquisitor (Witch Hunter of Verena) of Talabheim
- Roderick von Carson, Sigmarite Witch Hunter in Marienberg
- Osric Falkenheim, aging and increasingly embittered Witch Hunter in Wasteland
- Luther Gerhard, Witch Hunter in Nordland
- Adelle Ketzenblum, Witch Hunter of the Order of the Silver Hammer (Sigmarite), last seen in Averland
- Matthias Volke, itinerant Witch Hunter (idealist at heart but increasing bitter, even devious) and great shot with Hochland Long Rifle
- Detlef Johansson, Imperial Inquisitor who despises elves and is said to be a close friend of the Grand Theogonist
- Eladriel, elven Witch Hunter with an usual (for an elf) but healthy dislike of magick, recently retired in Middenheim
- Karl Kuten, self-appointed Black Hunter (Ulrican Witch Hunter) and opponent of Emperor's Edict on Mutants, last seen in southern Middenland
- Peder Haussner, fanatical follower of Sigmar who once discovered his wife sleeping with a servant and proceeded to divorce her, sell everything he owned, joined the Order, and persecuted every woman he could find as a Witch.
- Helmuth Klausner, a witch hunter who fights fire with fire. A desolate man for whom all means are good in destroying the forces of evil.
- Wolfgart Krieger, founder of The Order of the Silver Hammer (which ultimately became The Ancient Initiatic and Holy Order of the Templars of Sigmar) and personal friend of Sigmar who that the order be founded after the terror of Nagash
- Johann Helstrum, first Grand Theogonist and named head of the order in IC 73
- Witch Hunter General Johann Van Hal, a firm believer in burning all prestidigitators, comes to fame after slaying the vampire lord Gunther von Bloodfel and purging his haunted castle in the Reikwald late in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He wields the Stake of Sigmar and is accompanied by the Sigmarite Priest Wilhelm Hasburg who carries the ancient tome 'The Hammer of Witches' and a staff topped with the jawbone of an ox which Sigmar used to slay an army of Skaven.
- Magnus Gault is known for tracing the corruption infecting townships in the empire to its water source with his Greatsword and Dwarf companions where the Skaven

were infecting it with Warpstone. He puts to the torch the infected hometown of the Greatsword Hans Vogel, who regretfully helps him do this. They are later joined by the dwarf survivor Vargni Valhirsson.

- Zacharia Schmudt was a Witch Hunter who had some success in laying siege to the enemies of Sigmar.
- Witch Hunter General Jan Van Damm - famous for cleansing the Fortress Rothermayer in Sylvania.
- Richt Karver - a witch hunter who has discovered a way of torturing devotees of slaanesh.

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98