

A BITTER HARVEST

A WFRP2 adventure set in the rural Empire for 3-6 second-career characters, by 'Ovid'.

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May Sigmar's blessings fall upon the valiant playtesters, who fought back the Chaos to give this work form.

INTRODUCTION

(GM's eyes only from the start)

A Bitter Harvest is designed for 3-6 characters in their second careers, although the difficulty level can be changed for groups of other sizes and experience levels. It can be run independently or inserted into an existing campaign. It is a rural adventure, involving social interaction amongst commoners, outdoors travel and some magic. A party without stealth skills will have a very hard time. Familiarity with Greenskins and someone with Magical Sense would help but are by no means necessary. Careful roleplayers can complete the adventure with only one easy combat. Clumsy ones and/or PCs with an overwhelming hatred of Goblinoids (e.g. an uncontrollably deranged Trollslayer) will risk losing Fate Points in a full-scale battle. While most kinds of characters can contribute, very urban-focussed or upper-class characters will need careful roleplaying and gamesmastering.

The adventure can take place in any hilly area within a day's travel of a town on a major river, although if the campaign is set after the Storm of Chaos it should be placed towards the West and South of the Empire where the economy is relatively undisturbed. It takes place in late summer or early autumn.

The players will need to show initiative to get the most out of the adventure. The first part is linear, but with numerous roleplaying opportunities during which the PCs can learn what is going on. What they discover will then inform their decisions in the much more open conclusion. Completion should take 2-4 sessions (8-16 hours of play).

Shaded text denotes extra options, background and GM tips.

Note that this adventure contains adult themes.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

The idea for this adventure was inspired by a real event. The thirteenth-century 'Baltic Crusades' were characterised by tit-for-tat raiding between German and Baltic Christians on the one hand and pagan tribes on the other. The summer of 1215 was especially bloody for the pagan Estonians. After suffering two attacks from Latvian Christians, an unexpected third army, "caught people coming out of the woods to the fields and villages for food, and, burning some of them alive and slitting the throats of others with their swords, they inflicted various torments until the Estonians gave up all their money and led them to all the hiding places in the woods and handed over the women and children into their power. But this did not soften the spirit of the Latvians... they spared no one, but killed everyone of the male sex, took the women and children captive... and returned home happy with their plunder." – The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia, c.19.3

Maximilian Steiger is a very big deal in the village of Vorberg, but he has a bigger secret. Twelve years ago the village was threatened by a Goblinoid warband. The villagers hid their womenfolk and infants in a cave in the hills and settled in for a siege. One of their number, a young man called Willie 'Harefoot' Treumann, was sent for a help but returned with the rescuing army a day too late: although the Greenskins had abandoned the siege, they had found the women and babies and taken them away as slaves. Willie was a broken man, especially when he found out what had actually happened.

The day before his return, the villagers, thinking he hadn't got through, parleyed with the Orc boss. In return for sparing the village, its leadership, unbeknownst to the rest, betrayed their womenfolk to the Orcs. The main instigator of this agreement was Max Steiger; two of its victims were his wife Johanna and young daughter Kati. The men involved in the parley, including Willie's brother Erich and the innkeeper Horst, swore each other to secrecy and gradually got on with life, remarrying and raising the surviving male children, such as Max and Johanna's son, Max Jnr. The village prospered under Max's leadership, developing a thriving hemp industry.

Although the Greenskins killed almost all their slaves before long, Johanna survived and learnt from her new Orc 'husband' how they had been captured (as well as, falsely, that her son was dead). She had been brought up as a herbalist and also had a small amount of magical talent. Using a combination of her own cunning and a mind-influencing brew called Mother Knows Best, she brought the Orc boss and much of his warband under control until, with the help of her allies, she killed her 'husband' and took control of the tribe. Many of the Greenskins have since been

killed in various engagements but she has now led the remnants back to the village, set up base in the hidden cave and is planning a slow revenge.

<u>Timeline</u>	
26 years ago	Max & Johanna marry
25 years ago	Max Jnr ('Maxli') born
20 years ago	Klaus born
16 years ago	Kati born
12 years ago	The first Orc attack
10 years ago	Erich & Enid marry, Dieter born.
8 years ago	Gregor born, Beate returns to Vorberg
7 years ago	Horst & Liselotte marry
4 years ago	Johanna becomes boss

The PCs get involved when Max Snr tries to get married again. It's part of a business deal with Franz Raffke, a major purchaser, who has a young daughter, Helena. Unfortunately the dowry, which was supposed to be following Max to the town where the wedding takes place, hasn't arrived. Franz demands that he be able to send agents back with Max and his new wife to ensure that payment comes. Max agrees so long as both pay for neutral third parties – the PCs.

The party travels to Vorberg, but discover that the wagons carrying the dowry had been attacked by Goblinoids and the village is in a state of fear. They learn that these Goblinoids are the same warband that previously attacked, costing the village its women and babies. Sent to reconnoitre the Greenskins' camp, the PCs discover that they are now led by one of those women and may learn of the original betrayal and that this attack is motivated by revenge. The PCs must then decide what to do.

The theme of this adventure is how women, in a society where men have the power, can be treated like tools to be used and discarded, how those women try to accommodate themselves to,

escape from or end up being twisted by that dynamic and how the next generation then bears the legacy. It seeks to provide a memorable playing experience by presenting players with a complex moral situation which can't be

divided into 'good vs. evil' or 'Empire vs. Chaos', but instead with one whose horror results from petty human selfishness and cowardice and where selling out humans to Greenskins might be the right (or least wrong) solution.

CHAPTER ONE: THE WEDDING

While visiting a river port, the PCs encounter the wedding celebrations of Maximilian and Helena Steiger. Either the reception is held in the inn where they are staying or they become involved in some other set of

celebrations (see the shaded text). There's very good reason for getting involved – the beer is free. Remember to keep track of the PCs' drinking (see *WFRP*, page 115).

Depending on how quickly the GM wants to get to the 'meat' of the story, this might be a good time to fill in details of this region's marriage customs. Some suggestions include:

- The bride and groom approach from opposite ends of town in two processions, one of women distributing flowers for luck and one of men distributing copper pennies. They meet in the town square before the wedding party enters the temple of Sigmar. Once they emerge, the festivities begin.
- The bride's family pretends to 'kidnap' the bride and the guests (including PCs) compete to find and 'rescue' her. The winners are rewarded with a cask of the local ale. Lutz Wassertraeger (see below) might offer to tell the PCs where the bride is in return for a 'small consideration'.
- The men compete in a running race around the village, each carrying one of the village maidens on his back. The winner is 'married' to 'his' girl until dawn the next day. There's no shame in anything that happens in that time and any children conceived are considered blessed. This would be a good opportunity to introduce Freudig Bumsen (see below).

Before long Max has his arm round the PCs' shoulders and is pressing drinks into their hands. He takes on his role as man of the hour (and, of course, centre of attention) very enthusiastically. Being a sharp businessman, he is using this opportunity to get to know people in town. The fact that the PCs might be disreputable won't bother him, since he is well aware such people can be useful. The GM might allow him a **Charm Test** on the PCs as he apparently takes a genuine interest in who they are and what brought them to town.

If the PCs look for his bride (or if the GM requests an **Average (+0%) Perception Test** and they pass), they

will see a heavily pregnant and much younger woman sitting nearby, sipping occasionally from a tankard of small beer and looking very shy and unsure of herself. Next to her are another young woman, apparently her maid-of-honour, and a very unhappy-looking man of roughly Max's age. A **Very Easy (+30) Gossip Test** will get the information that the bride is Helena and the man Franz Raffke, her father and a prominent boat-chandler (supplier of ropes, equipment and stores). Two or more Degrees of Success (DoS) tells the PCs that the marriage is part of a business deal between him and Max and that both want a boy-child to inherit the business. A **Routine (+10%) Common**

Knowledge (Empire) Test reveals that it's not unusual for the bride to be visibly pregnant on the wedding day: it ensures that the marriage will be fertile

before any binding commitments are made. The PCs can't immediately find out why Franz looks so unhappy, however.

The GM can deliver information either quickly through skill rolls or can insist on roleplaying. In the latter case, here are a couple of NPCs with whom the PCs can interact. Use Villager profiles (see The Cast, below), if necessary:

- Freudig Bumsen is a pretty, plump young woman who's out for a hunky man (or, even better, a Dwarf) to bed and one of the PCs is a candidate. She'll pretend to be a friend of Helena's and although they did grow up together, Freudig always resented Helena for being a bit more popular (and respected) among the town lads. Freudig will put up a very bad façade of pity for her "dear friend" for being "married off to some fat, old hick just to seal a silly business deal", but in truth she is rather spitefully gleeful about it and will dish on how Franz is using his daughter to ensure his own future because he failed to sire a male heir.
- Lutz Wassertraeger is a dogsbody for Franz, running his errands, passing on messages etc.. Franz pays little attention to Lutz, and the latter takes the opportunity to pilfer small amounts of money. Lutz is sly, but not as sly as he thinks he is, so he'll start by selling bits of information for pennies, but will quickly get drunk and run his mouth off about how Franz wasn't man enough to have a son and how he'd like to get his hands on Helena. From Lutz, the PCs can learn that Max has in recent years become a significant supplier of hemp in the region and Franz hopes the marriage will lock his competitors out of this supply. In addition, they could get on Franz's good side by exposing Lutz as the resentful, pathetic little toad he is.

Later in the celebrations, Franz and Max get into an altercation, which starts as a heated discussion and escalates into raised voices. An **Average (+0%) Perception Test** (Acute Hearing grants +10%, as does an additional **Average (+0%) Speak Language (Reikspiel) Test** to pick out the slurred words) will tell the PCs that the conversation is about a missing dowry, before the two men leave to continue the discussion somewhere in private.

While it's clear that the two don't want to be followed, any PC that does so should make a **Routine (+10%) Silent Move Test**, **Opposed** to Max's **Hard (-20%) Perception Test**, since the two men are distracted. A success means the PC can listen in to the conversation for a bit. It is clear that Franz is somewhat drunk and very angry with Max. Apparently a large delivery of hemp was supposed to have arrived by now as a

dowry. The PC overhears Franz say that he, "could have given that girl to any respectable businessman in town" but that Max had promised him the best prospects, even though his friends had warned him not to deal with an uppity peasant like Max. If Max isn't to be trusted, though, Franz will sue the shirt off his back and ensure his daughter divorces him and that their child grows up in a Shallyan orphanage where no-one can find it. Max tries to calm Franz down, reassuring him that the dowry will be his and asking him not to spoil his daughter's 'happy day' (a point about which Franz is noticeably scornful; Max doesn't particularly care either, but wants to look like the good guy).

A failed test means the men spot the PC, who can then either leave or decide to intervene. Alternatively, a PC can just decide to approach them openly before being spotted. An intervention requires

an **Average (+0%) Charm Test** with various situational modifiers (-10% if the PC was spotted sneaking around, although this can be negated by good roleplaying, e.g. “Sorry, I was just popping out for a smoke. Can’t have a puff of pipeweed indoors any more. Bloody Shallyan do-gooders.”; +10% if the PC had previously made a good impression on either man; +10% for a good argument, like pointing out that this is best resolved in the morning). If the PCs have made a good impression before, then an offer to help the next day will be welcomed (an additional +10%). Obviously, penalties might be incurred for particularly tactless roleplaying. A successful roll means that the men calm down and thank the PC(s) for their help. On a failure (or no intervention at all) the men still stop arguing but part angrily and only turn to

the PCs later out of a lack of other mutually tolerable options.

After the incident, any PC who might reasonably be thought to know something about marriage rights (e.g. lawyers, priests, roadwardens) will be approached by Max and/or (separately) Franz and asked whether a marriage is valid without the delivery of the promised dowry. Max will leave the PC happy if the answer is yes, and Franz will be happy if the answer is no. The GM should take the opportunity of putting the PC in an awkward position.

Helena will leave for bed fairly early (much earlier than her husband), but eventually the various guests will trickle away or pass out. The PCs are woken in the morning by a fresh-looking Max and a not so fresh-looking Franz.

CHAPTER TWO: THE JOURNEY

They want the PCs to go with Max and Helena to Vorberg (Max’s village) to check on what happened to the dowry and, if necessary, escort it back. Each is willing to pay the PCs 10 *gc* (or an amount appropriate to your campaign’s economy). PCs can try an **Opposed Haggle Test** to get more money. The GM rolls Max’s **Routine (+10%) Haggle Test**, to reflect the help he gets from Franz, with the PCs rolling at **Routine (+10%)** if one or more of them made a good impression the night before, **Challenging (-10%)** if they made a bad one, and otherwise **Average (+0%)**. A success for the PCs raises the payment to 12 *gc* plus one more for every DoS. A failure leaves the reward at 10 *gc*. If it looks like the PC’s might turn down the deal, Max or Franz mentions that there might be more work in the future if the PC’s carry out this job well: these men are both good local contacts to have (and bad ones to anger).

Assuming the PCs accept, Max introduces them to Andreas Kessler, who is in charge of Max’s security. If any of the PCs are still the worse for wear, then Andreas takes them to an inn (if they’re not there already) and gives the barkeep a pouch of herbs to dissolve in hot water. The concoction is disgusting, but allows the character a **Toughness Test** (with a -10% *penalty* for Resistance to Poison, since the herbs are, in fact, a toxin). On a success, the alcohol’s effects are banished immediately. On a failure the PC undergoes several minutes of vomiting and explosive diarrhoea before recovering entirely.

Andreas leads three guards, who will be riding next to the newlyweds’ rented coach. (For the guards use the **Sell-Swords** profile in *WFRP*, page 235.) PCs with horses can ride with Andreas and the guards. There is room for two more on the box next to the elderly coachman and another two could fit

into the coach with Max, Helena and Helena's maid-of-honour, her (genuine) childhood friend Barbara 'Bibi' Emmerich. If there are more PCs than will fit, assume that Max has arranged another small cart and its driver for the wedding gifts and the PCs can ride perched on that.

It will take about a day to reach Vorberg, and the PCs may want to make small-talk on the way. The ordinary guards and the coachman are hired labour and know little. The coachman, Ernst, is ancient and gloomy, while the guards vary between Andreas's right-hand man Juergen, who is hung-over and sullen, Markus, who is boastful of old exploits, and Udo, a fresh-faced youngster who's half-wanting, half-fearing any action.

Talking to Helena or Bibi is difficult because both are quiet around Max (Helena out of shyness and Bibi out of consideration for her friend). Female PCs will get a chance to talk to them in private during the morning when the coach stops to allow people to relieve themselves and again when it stops for lunch. A **Gossip Test (Average (+0%))** for Helena; **Routine (+10%)** for Bibi) shows that Helena is putting a brave face on a situation she has no control over, and her friend is just trying to be supportive. Helena is most concerned about the baby and hopes for a boy, since that's what Max and her father want from her. In private Bibi can be rather cutting about Franz but tries to be polite about Max for Helena's sake. Bibi does let slip, however, that Max already has a son, just not one willing to take over the business.

Max is very easy to talk to. He will happily regale everyone with stories of how he made it as a businessman and how much he's done for his village. As regards Helena, he'll play the doting husband. He expresses concern about

the missing dowry if asked, but also confidence that his trusted bailiff, one Erich Treumann, will have had good reason not to have brought it and that everything will be all right in the end. An **Average (+0%) Perception Test** will tell the PCs that Max is more worried than he'll let on. If asked about why he has married so late or about his family, Max will look sad and will admit that he had been married once but that his wife tragically died. He has one grown-up son, Max Jnr ('Maxli'), who is however not interested in the family business. The older Max wishes his son would be a bit more grateful, but what can he do?

At lunch, if any of the PCs have set up a particularly good relationship with Max, they will find that he leads them aside and, after thanking them profusely for taking the job and talking about how awkward the situation is and how it would be ideally solved quickly and painlessly, he will offer a 5 *gc* bonus to the PC he's talking to if that PC makes sure that they report back to Franz in terms favourable to Max. If the PC accepts, Max will be very happy. If the PC refuses out of principle, however, Max will look shocked that he might be thought to have intended anything other than practicality and his wife's peace-of-mind. He will be quite obviously displeased with the PC, however.

Andreas Kessler cuts a very professional figure. A devout follower of Myrmidia after a long stint fighting in Tilea, he moves and acts efficiently and does not tolerate foolishness on the job. He's curious about other people, however, and will happily chat with PCs who seem serious people. He's only worked for Max for a short time, having been hired at the beginning of the summer. Max had to bring in a lot of outside workers to help with the hemp harvest and needed someone in charge of security.

If the adventure takes place after the Storm of Chaos, then these casual labourers are refugees from the North who need work. Max is genuinely happy that he can combine the virtues of business and charity by employing people in need for everyone's mutual benefit. Andreas, however, doesn't like or trust them – he views Northerners as violent barbarians and the fact that these ones survived when others died makes them even more suspicious in his eyes.

Andreas respects Max as a fair boss, although he generally isn't fond of wheeler-dealers. An **Average (+0%) Charm Test** will get Andreas to admit that he actively dislikes Erich Treumann, whom he accuses of being unprofessionally harsh with his employees. He thinks especially little of

the man because Andreas once caught him beating his young son, Dieter. If asked about Maxli, however, Andreas will bluff an off-hand appreciation for the young man, whom he describes as nothing like his father, being instead a woodsman who spends little time in the village but is a good drinking companion when he does come into the local pub. Andreas will look noticeably uncomfortable (**Routine (+10%) Perception Test**) if questioned more closely about Maxli; PCs should be allowed to draw whatever conclusions they wish. Andreas will simply shrug if asked about the appropriateness of the match between Helena and the older Max: it's sad, perhaps, but it's just the way of the world for young women to be passed from one old man to another.

CHAPTER THREE: THE BATTLEFIELD

After lunch, the terrain turns into rolling hills and the forests become thicker. It's late afternoon, a couple of hours before dusk and not far from the village, when Andreas returns from scouting up ahead, visibly disturbed. If he has befriended a PC on the way, then he will first go to that PC with his news: around the next curve the road is filled with abandoned wagons and many dead guards. If he hasn't befriended any PCs, then any of them outside might be able to listen in (**Average (+0%) Perception Test**; +10% for Acute Hearing) on Andreas's conversation with the other guards. The people inside the coach feel it come to a stop and soon Max will look out of the carriage and demand to know from Andreas and the nearest PC what's going on. Andreas will hesitate for a moment, so any PC will have a chance to answer. They need to be tactful so as not to scare either Max or, especially, Helena. Some story about there seeming to be a blockage in the road would do (which is what

Andreas will come up with if given a chance).

Andreas is aware that the PCs are there to secure the dowry and so will be sure to take one of them with him back to the scene of the crime so that they can consult on what to do.

The PCs walk into the remnants of a battle. There are four wagons, their horses butchered, and all around them about a dozen human corpses, peppered with short, black arrows. Information should be given in response to PC actions and questions:

- the arrows are crudely made, with viciously barbed iron heads;
- most of the humans have been shot;
- they have been only partly stripped of weapons and armour, and money and valuables have been largely left behind;
- there are no other corpses other than those of the guards (Andreas can confirm this);

- Andreas can confirm/point out that Erich Treumann should have been with the convoy but his body isn't among the dead;
- the wagons are still full of hemp – there was no attempt to steal the goods.
- the convoy needed to set out early to make it to town in one day and was stopped not far from the village, so the attack must have taken place in broad daylight.

Further information can be gleaned by certain types of characters and from **Skill Tests**:

- Dwarfs, characters in military careers (including Roadwardens), those with Trade (Armourer, Bowyer or Weaponsmith) or Common Knowledge (Greenskins) skills will automatically recognise the arrows as Goblinoid; others who voice this suspicion can have that confirmed on a successful **Average (+0%) Intelligence Test**.
- a **Common Knowledge (Empire) Test (Routine (+10%))** for anyone from this area of the Empire; **Challenging (-10%)** for outsiders) will tell the PCs that this region has suffered Greenskin attack before, but there's been nothing serious for a while;
- an **Average (+0%) Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) Test** reveals that the convoy was attacked from both sides of the road and the attackers avoided melee;
- an **Easy (+20%) Follow Trail Test** reveals that the attackers came through the woods roughly from the direction of the village and returned the same way; if the PCs try to

pursue the attackers, Andreas will remind them that they need to protect the carriage.

The question then becomes how to proceed. Andreas will listen to PCs' suggestions, although he will make clear that neither returning to town nor bringing the hemp shipment with them are options. Ultimately he'll have to go back to Max and report. He'll beckon Max out of the coach before he does so, in order not to scare the ladies, although Bibi in particular will demand to know what's going on and only be stilled by an embarrassed and worried Helena. When told of what's happened, Max will go sheet-white and ask Andreas what they should do. Andreas will recommend shutting the blinds on the coach so the ladies don't witness the scene and making for the village as quickly as possible. Max will ask if Erich's body was found and when told that it wasn't, he'll breathe a sigh of relief that at least Erich seems to have escaped. **An Average (+0%) Perception Test** will tell the PCs that Andreas looks sceptical at this.

Assuming things proceed as Andreas recommends, Max gets back into the coach and draws the blinds, claiming there is a long-dead horse on the road ahead and that he wants to spare the ladies the sight. The carriage will start up at speed and Andreas, along with either one PC or Juergen (who becomes markedly more alert once there's danger) rides ahead. Have the PCs make **Perception Tests** to keep them on edge, but nothing happens in the hour's journey to the village where they arrive just as the sun dips behind the line of a hill.

CHAPTER FOUR: ARRIVAL

The first sight of Vorberg is striking. Rounding the top of a wooded hill, the group looks down on a village nestled

amongst fields and, behind it, the local 'mountain' (in fact a particularly large hill). The latter is unusual because it juts

quite suddenly from the ground and, although its sides are forested like the other hills, the tree-line ends below the summit, which is topped with a ridge and two rock peaks. Andreas heard that the resemblance between the twin peaks

and the twin-tailed comet was once used to sell the hill as a pilgrimage site called Sigmarsberg, but it never caught on and most people know the mountain as The Horned Monk, because the tree-line with the bare top looks like a tonsure.

‘Horned’ was once a euphemism for ‘cuckolded’, since men who were cheated on by their wives were said to have ‘horns’. An **Academic Knowledge (Theology) Test (Average (+0%))** for followers of Shallya or Ranald; **Hard (-20%)** for others) might allow a PC to recall a Venerated Soul (a sort of saint – see *Tome of Salvation*, page 95) of Shallya known only as ‘The Horned Monk’. His legend says he was a particularly brutal count from far away (some say Bretonnia, some Estalia) who insisted on the letter of the law being carried out without mercy. In vengeance, Ranald came to him in a dream disguised as Shallya and seduced him, promising to be his wife and lover if he would only commit to her. The very next morning, he abdicated his county and became a Shallyan monk. But everything he tried went sour. Wherever he went, Shallyans shunned him since they sensed his motives weren’t pure. People he ‘healed’ would come to grief immediately afterwards. Criminals who were released due to his pleas for mercy went on to commit even greater crimes. Meanwhile Ranald continued to plague him with fevered, erotic dreams of Shallya, who seemed to promise him so much but then always favoured others over him, no matter what he did to prove his love. Finally, pursued by Witch Hunters and mad with despair and paranoia, the monk found refuge in a cave under twin peaks. There, a broken man, he begged Shallya’s forgiveness for whatever he had done wrong. Finally she took pity on him and lifted his madness. Some say his heart was then so filled with love that it burst in his chest and his soul joined her in a pure, spiritual union. But others say he left that cave and wanders the Old World still, kept immortally alive and working true healing miracles by his now-genuine love for Shallya. People pray to the Horned Monk for help in controlling their own or their partners’ jealousy, in not acting out of selfish motivations, to escape from criminal punishment and (unofficially) to cure impotence.

After sighting the village, the party and the carriage quickly come out of the woods and start crossing the fields. A **Routine (+10%) Common Knowledge (Empire) Test** (characters with a rural background get another +10%) tells the PCs that this is harvest season and people normally work as long as possible – now, at dusk, people should be packing up and leaving the fields, but in this case they are already deserted. Andreas and any PCs with him arrive at the village gate first, where they are challenged by a guard. When Andreas identifies himself, there’s an audible commotion (an **Average (+0%) Perception Test** to hear someone say, “Thank Sigmar! Max made it through!”) and the gate opens to let everyone into

the village, then is shut very quickly behind them. The carriage is soon surrounded by a crowd of scared and happy villagers.

Max will leave Helena behind in the carriage to go and find out what is going on and will be met first by Horst Prahlhans, the village innkeeper. Bibi will object strongly to Helena being left behind and will demand to know what is happening. If necessary, she will try to enlist the PCs to find out for her since she will stay resolutely by Helena’s side.

It requires only a **Very Easy (+30%) Gossip Test** to discover what is happening. The dowry shipment left in the morning two days earlier under the

command of Erich Treumann, who also took his 10 year-old son Dieter with him. For a day nothing seemed out of the ordinary. This morning, however, people who went into the fields to work ran back when they discovered the mutilated bodies of Erich and Dieter tied up in the fields where the scarecrows had been. The village is now in a state of siege, although no one has seen any possible perpetrators.

In addition to or in place of the **Gossip Test**, the PCs might decide to ask specific people. Depending on their actions and their success in the test, they will get some spin/additional information:

- Andreas will, after speaking to Max and Horst, be able to relay the above information to the PCs, but will urge them not to reveal any details about the battlefield, especially the Greenskin involvement – Max has decided (and Andreas agrees) that it is important for the villagers' morale to think that the enemy are human bandits who could be bought off;
- Max will make the same point if asked directly;
- if the PCs made their **Gossip Test** with one DoS or less, then they meet Beate, Max's sister, who will relay the information and bitterly criticise him for being a cheapskate and not providing enough guards – in fact Beate uses every opportunity to criticise her brother, including for leaving Helena in the carriage if the PCs don't take the initiative in getting her lodging;
- if the PCs made their **Gossip Test** with two or three DoS's, then they meet Maxli, who expresses his grief for Erich, Dieter and Enid (their wife and mother who is currently praying in the village's Sigmarite shrine) and will let slip that he thinks this is a Greenskin attack, but agrees with his father that this should not

become common knowledge; an **Average (+0%) Perception Test** allows a PC to notice that when Maxli talks of Greenskins and the tragedy of a mother losing her son he fondles a pendant round his neck: a **Hard (-20%) Magical Sense Test** (or **Average (+0%)** if the PC holds the pendant in his hand) tells the character that it was once magical (see the shaded text below for more detail);

- if the PC's made their **Gossip Test** with four or more DoS's, they meet a scruffy-looking man with stale alcohol on his breath and dressed in the robes of a Sigmarite Initiate who claims the attack is punishment for the villagers' sins; this is Wilhelm 'Willie' Treumann who has come out of the Sigmarite shrine to see what was going on but returns to it quickly to continue consoling Enid.

Maxli's pendant is of copper and silver wire intertwined to form a crude humanoid figure and was given to him as a baby by his mother Johanna. She has given similar pendants to other members of her family. The intertwining of two metals into one figure represents how love makes two people into one. The maker must give the pendant to the recipient at a significant occasion (typically a birthday, dooming or marriage) and can only ever do so once to any given individual, who can only ever have one functioning pendant (later gifts supersede older ones). The pendant magically protects the recipient who wears it from one life-threatening occurrence (in game terms, gaining one Fate Point), so long as the maker and recipient love each other. An **Average (+0%) Academic Knowledge (the Arts, Philosophy or Theology) Test** will reveal the symbolism of the wire. An **Average (+0%) Academic Knowledge (Magic) Test** indicates that the pendant is at least supposed to have protective power; a success of 2

DoS or more indicates that this power works only for a specific person. The **Magical Sense Test** regarding Maxli's pendant reflects the fact that he used his Fate Point during the last Orc attack, but a sensitive mage can still detect the remnants of his mother's love on it (which also, incidentally, provides a hint that she's still alive).

Eventually Helena steps out of the carriage, either because the PCs have intervened to get Max to attend to her or because Beate does so, all the while insulting her brother about his lack of grace, much to his embarrassment. Conversation about the attack will suddenly cease and all eyes will be on Helena. With Bibi and Max/Beate by her side, she will be guided through the

crowd to Max's large house and on the way she will be greeted in a friendly, if slightly pitying manner, by the village. The crowd then slowly disperses.

After this, Horst will introduce himself to the PCs and offer to show them to their lodgings in his inn, 'The Cowardly Orc'. As they enter they will be met by Liselotte, his much-younger (22) wife, who will note that they must be tired after their journey and offers to make them a good, hot meal to have once they've settled in. A mentally slow young man called Klaus Einfaltig, whose parents died in the last attack and whom Horst has taken in, will help them with their luggage. Everything is paid for by Max.

CHAPTER FIVE: ASKING AROUND

For the rest of the evening the PCs are more or less free to roam the village. By this point they ought to be wondering how they are going to complete their job and, more to the point, get back to town without getting killed. They will find no support whatsoever for the idea of fetching the hemp and taking it to town or to the village – it's far too dangerous. Even if the PCs suggest combining this with escorting Helena back to safety, they will have no luck: Helena is scared and Max has no intention of giving Franz the chance to renege on his arrangement. Suggesting everyone leave en masse will also be rejected: people want to stay to protect their homes.

If the PCs don't decide to investigate options themselves, thinking they can leave it up to Max and/or Andreas to resolve the issue for them, have them be approached in private by Bibi. She tells them that Helena is scared and that although Max and Andreas say reassuring things, they've kept both Helena and Bibi in the dark. She wants the PCs to find out what's happening

and a way to get Helena back to town. If the PCs don't seem inclined to act out of concern for Helena, then Bibi can remind them how grateful her wealthy father would be if she got back safely and was rescued from marriage to a man who couldn't even guarantee her life, quite apart from the delivery of a dowry.

The PCs have a number of investigative options. The two Maxes and Andreas are initially nowhere to be found: asking for them (from, say, Horst or one of Andreas's guards) reveals that the three men have withdrawn in private to discuss options. But there are other potential sources of information elsewhere. The Cowardly Orc is the home of Horst and Liselotte (Klaus as well, but he doesn't know anything) and is also a good place to meet the other men of the village (who can also be met guarding the stockade). The Sigmarite Shrine is where Erich's widow, Enid, and his brother Willie are currently praying and seeking solace. The Big House is where Max lives, but its ground floor is currently occupied by

the women of the village, who have gathered there with their children. From the drawing room they are presided over, not entirely to their delight, by Max's sister Beate. This is also where Helena and Bibi have been brought to

be plied with questions and commiserated with. Finally, most of the bought-in labourers keep to the Labourers' Quarters so as to avoid trouble with the natives, but some can also be found on guard at the stockade.

Vorberg is a fairly ordinary village inside a stockade, but it has four significant buildings alongside the usual cottages, workshops, gardens and a well. Relevant Trade skills can provide details of architecture, age, upkeep, etc.:

- The Cowardly Orc – The village's inn, run by Horst and Liselotte, is frequented by every male villager, and occasionally the casual labourers. It is small, but clean. The PCs share a single room. There is no lock on the door, but it does contain a storage chest with a key that the PCs can borrow.
- The Sigmarite Shrine – A small domed building, not particularly ornate but neatly kept. It was built in the previous generation by Max's and Beate's father as part of his failed attempt to turn 'Sigmarsberg' into a pilgrimage destination. The altar is covered in aging mementoes of the village's dead women and children. Prominent is a portrait of a woman and a young (roughly three year-old) girl with a Classical subscription, reading: 'To my Johanna and Katharina in grief and regret. Max.' Draped over the portrait is a pendant of the same type Maxli is wearing (see above). An **Average (+0%) Magical Sense Test** detects no magic: Johanna gave this to Max on their wedding day, but it never worked.
- The Big House – The largest and fanciest building in the village, fitted out with expensive, carved wood panelling. It even has a fashionable drawing room, newly built especially to receive Helena, but now where Beate is holding court. The two Maxes and Andreas, meanwhile, have retired upstairs to the Master Library (in fact Max's smoking room, although there is one shelf of ornately bound but never read books) to consult.
- The Labourers' Quarters – Flimsy structures erected as dormitories for the labourers, set up against the side of the stockade, away from the centre of the village. When not working (or on sentry duty), the labourers wile away their time here, drinking and gambling on small tables between the rows of cots.
- The Stockade – A standard wooden affair, although poorly maintained. Most parts have a walkway along the inside, although breaks mean that it's impossible to walk the entire circuit without clambering down one ladder and up the next.

What the PCs learn will depend on what they ask (which will, in turn, depend on what they've already found out, so co-operation and networking will help). The information is given below in the text box as a series of PC questions and what each NPC person/group would answer. Require **Gossip** and **Charm Tests**, modified by the quality of the roleplaying and nature of the interaction: e.g. the women are likely to confide more in a female PC, Horst would be flattered to have his bravery praised by a

hardened warrior, and Beate will react poorly if she thinks low-born characters are showing insufficient subservience.

When the PCs talk to the women in Max's house (or whenever the GM feels it's appropriate) have them make a **Routine (+10%) Perception Test**. On a success they notice that, although the men of the village are of all different ages, almost all the women (except Beate) are young (under 35). A **Hard (-20%) Speak Language (Reikspiel)**

Test reveals they are from this general region, but not the immediate locality:

they've clearly married in from elsewhere.

Who do you think was responsible for the attack on the wagons?

- Horst: "Bandits, probably, trying to snatch what they can and scare us into giving up more. It won't work – we've survived worse... much worse."
- Liselotte: "It's horrible, all horrible. My husband says it's bandits and not Orcs like Beate and some of those filthy workers are saying. I keep saying: it doesn't matter anyway. Horst, Max and the rest of the men will sort these people out. It's just such a shame about Dieter. Poor lad!"
- Male villager: "It was bandits, wasn't it? That's what Max says. Yeah, that's right – bandits."
- Enid: "Does it matter? My little Dieter is dead and it's all my no-account husband's fault. I told him he was too young to go, but Erich wanted to make a man of him. A man?! Don't make me laugh! Real men keep their wives safe; they don't go round beating everyone they want to control and who's too weak to resist. Dieter was always looking out for his mama. *sob*"
- Willie: "If Max is saying it's bandits, then it must be bandits, right?" [If spoken to alone:] "You ever heard of bandits that did something like this? No. This is Sigmar's will. We failed him and he is punishing us for our failure. This day had to come."
- Beate: "My idiot brother's saying it's bandits? Don't be ridiculous. These are Orcs, you mark my words. I knew all that stuff about Max scaring them away last time was nonsense. If my brother did it, there was no way it was going to stick! I just hope I can help poor Helena."
- Women: "Well, Max is saying it's bandits. And Andreas is backing him up. That Beate is just a bitter old woman. Just because her husband died and left her penniless, that doesn't mean she has to take it out on her brother."
- Labourers: "They're saying it's bandits, but that's nonsense. No bandit does that to a little boy. My bet's on Orcs or mutants. Beastmen? No – Beastmen would've eaten them."

What happened here before?/Why are there so few older women?

- Horst: "Ah, now that's a horrible story. Twelve years ago the Orcs came and we thought we'd all had it. I was a younger man then and wanted to fight it out, but Erich said we had to hide the womenfolk first. I said it was too much of a risk, but Max agreed and his first wife, Johanna, led them up the Old Hill Road to the cave at the top of the Horned Monk. The road was overgrown and impossible to find, so he reckoned the Orcs would never find them there and they'd survive even if we were overrun. Willie went for help. We didn't know whether he got through, but we fought as long as we could. I killed twenty of 'em myself! Finally Max had the idea of bluffing the Orc boss about help coming and, what do you know, the old dog did it! The Orcs ran for their very lives and that's why my inn's the way it's named. Willie got back the next day with some troops and we all went to collect our women. But they were gone. I was lucky – my dear old ma had already passed and I wasn't yet married. But Max lost his wife and little baby daughter, and Willie never forgave himself."
- Liselotte: gives a similar account to her husband's, but with even more exaggeration of his role.
- Male villager: "Twelve years ago the Orcs came. We hid our women up in the

cave on the Horned Monk and sent Willie for help. But Max is a slippery one: called the Orc boss to a parley and said to him, bold as brass, that the army was coming and he should hop it before he got wiped out. Old Orc boss was terrified and off he went! But they found the women. Every single one of them. Don't like to think about what happened. Willie got back with help one day late. He never forgave himself. Some of us have married since then as best we can, but we don't forget."

- Enid: doesn't really know what happened then and isn't interested in discussing it; grew up poor and was married to the relatively well-off Erich by her father when Erich showed he liked the look of her, even though she always found him disgusting.
- Willie: "It was twelve years ago. The Orcs came and Max sent the women into hiding. We needed someone fast to get to town and fetch help and I volunteered. Thought I'd be the hero! I slipped out, managed to avoid the Goblin guards and reached town, but I still failed. I didn't know how many Orcs there were and I wasn't able to persuade the authorities to put together a big troop. I was just a kid, not a politician. Eventually a commander saw I was an initiate of Sigmar and recognised a brother in the faith. I remember riding out in front, guiding this army and thinking I'd be the big hero. But I wasn't. I was a fool."
- Beate: "I wasn't here – I'd married out. But I know my brother. Do you really think that useless lump could parley with an Orc boss? Don't make me laugh! Sigmar forgive me, but it wouldn't surprise me if he'd sold those women out in return for being left alone. I heard he'd had enough of Johanna by the end, although I can't imagine he wanted to lose Kati as well. Why are the women so young? Ha! Why do you think old men marry young girls? Because they can!"
- Women: "It was a terrible tragedy what happened then. I hear they scared the Orcs off, but not before those beasts had taken their wives and babies. It's just too horrific to think about. We all made the best marriages we could. Sure, we'd all like someone who's young and can support us, but in the real world the two don't usually go together. These are decent men, for the most part. Enid drew the short straw."
- Labourers: "I don't believe half the things I hear about what happened back then. If they were so heroic, how come their women got snatched? Still, if you had the chance to marry over again, wouldn't you pick a nice young thing?"

What do you think of Max Snr/Erich Treumann/Willie Treumann?

- Horst: "Max is the best a man could be. It's fantastic that he's finally found a lovely wife, just like I did. He wouldn't be where he is today without myself, of course, but I'm happy here with my inn and my 'Lotte, so I don't begrudge him his success. Erich was a good man to have by your side, although too stern at times. Willie's a tragedy. He was the golden boy, completely devoted to Sigmar and everyone thought he'd become a priest and go a long way. He was once voted 'Villager Most Likely to Become Grand Theogonist'. But not getting help in time turned him bitter. He started drinking and never left the village. He's always kept the shrine nice, though, I'll grant him that."
- Liselotte: "Max is a good man and a good leader of the village, but he couldn't do a thing without my Horst. If he'd listened a bit more to Horst and not to that tyrant Erich, we might not be in this mess. Why not? I don't know, but I'll tell you one thing: my husband never beat a woman black and blue. As for Willie,

he's just a drunk. I know he went through a lot, but so did Horst and *he* didn't fall apart."

- Male villager: "Max is all right. Brings a lot of money into the village, although I could do without the foreigners coming in to work the land. It's good that he's marrying again. At least this one's too young to have much of a say – his first wife was a bit of a handful, may Morr bless her rebellious soul. As for Erich, I know it's not right to speak ill of the dead, but he was a bastard to the core. His wife would be glad to be rid of him if the old tyrant hadn't taken Dieter along. The boy was always a bit soft, but he didn't deserve a dad like that. Or what the Or-, uh... bandits did to him. Willie's a sad case. He was Sigmar's favourite, no doubt, but never self-important or self-righteous about it. Sigmar forgive me, but maybe if he'd been less devout he wouldn't have taken it so hard when he failed. No wonder he's bitter, but his boozing doesn't help."
- Enid: "Max is a good man. A little too interested in money and not enough in people, otherwise he'd have noticed how rotten Erich was. But so long as my husband was running things well, I don't think Max wanted to see what he did to me and Dieter. Willie's always been too deep in ale and nightmares about the past to care about the here and now, but it looks like he might have snapped out of it – he's been a great help today."
- Willie: "Max wants to be good, but he is weak. Like most ambitious men he has a lot to lose and that turns you into a coward. He pays for it in his own way, I'm sure. Erich was my brother. Not a good brother (or a good husband or father for that matter) but he was my brother nonetheless. I pray that his soul has found the rest it never had in life."
- Beate: "Max thinks he's the centre of the world but he's a failure, just like our father was. He'll never amount to anything. Trying to marry up is just the latest pathetic attempt to put on airs. I feel sorry for the girl, Helena – she's got proper breeding and he's just dragging her down. Erich had potential, but between that low-born peasant girl he married on the one hand and my brother on the other, he never got to use it. I think he had a soft spot for no-hopers. That's probably why he stayed by his drunk of a brother as well."
- Women: "Max is a gentleman. We've always felt a bit sorry for him, what with him losing his wife and baby daughter all those years ago. There had been a bit of tension between him and Maxli over taking over the business, but he always respected his son, maybe for his mother's sake, and Helena should solve any inheritance issues! Erich was a vicious thug. Enid said nothing 'til now because she feared Erich would take it out on Dieter, but everyone knew what was happening. Occasionally, if she heard Erich had been drinking, she'd send Dieter to stay with one of us and she'd get beaten twice over: once for herself and once for the missing boy. Sigmar help me, but if anyone deserved what was done to him, it was Erich. We don't see much of Willie, because he's either in the temple, in his cups or sleeping it off. But by all accounts he used to be as different from Erich as day from night."
- Labourers: "Max is a decent boss. Pays a fair wage and sometimes even stops by to ask how we're doing. Good riddance to Erich, though: we're workers, not slaves, and he didn't treat his little boy much better. It's just such a shame about that kid. Willie's a harmless drunk, really, but no fun to share a pint with – he just gets bitter and depressed and starts crying. Seems to have sobered up today, though. And not a moment too soon!"

How are we going to get out of this situation?

- Horst: “Don’t you worry. Max and I will work out a plan. Why aren’t I talking to him now? I’ve got work to do here – Max knows that! He’ll call me soon enough.”
- Liselotte: “Horst and Max will sort everything out. Don’t you worry.”
- Male villager: “We stay put. We defend our lands. Try running if you want – see how far you get.”
- Enid: “What do you mean, get out? It’s already too late for me.”
- Willie: “We will pray, and if needs be fight. But always pray. We learnt once that mortal powers alone cannot help us.”
- Beate: “Maybe my brother will buy them off like last time.”
- Women: “The men will come up with some plan. We’ll fight alongside them, if we have to. We’ll not let them get their hands on us or our children – not after what they did to Dieter and his dad.”
- Labourers: “We’ll fight on the stockade, if it comes to it. That’s the safest option. But there’s no way we’re sticking our necks out for a stranger, no matter how fairly he’s treated us.”

The PCs may also enquire about the village’s defensive provisions. They consist of little more than sentries, both villagers and labourers, patrolling the stockade. In an emergency they are to shout to a runner who is to ring a bell hung up outside the door of The Cowardly Orc. The men in the village

will then gather with their weapons to be told what to do. PCs with suggestions for improving the system will be referred to Max and Andreas. Volunteers for sentry duty will be welcomed with a shrug, but they must use their own equipment.

CHAPTER SIX: THE PLAN

As the PCs start to wind up their investigations, or earlier if they’ve strongly insisted on seeing Max or Andreas, they will see Klaus running towards them. He insists they come with him to the Big House, because Max wants to talk to them. He doesn’t know anything more than that.

The PCs are led through the ground floor, crowded with women, and upstairs to the Master Library where they see the two Maxes and Andreas sitting round a table. The older Max is smoking a pipe and, after tipping Klaus a shilling and dismissing him, beckons the PCs to come inside and sit. There is one fewer chair than needed, so Andreas gets up and stands by the window instead. Max introduces his son (again, if the PCs have already met him) and

explains that no one knows the woods like Maxli does. He gestures his son to speak and Maxli explains what they know so far:

- as the PCs probably know, the story about the bandits is a lie – the convoy was attacked by Greenskins (if the PCs somehow failed to work this out at the battlefield, this is the opportunity to rectify that);
- when the bodies of Erich and Dieter were found, Maxli was able to track their killers back as far as the Old Hill Road – he is sure the Greenskins are camping in the cave under the summits of The Horned Monk, where they would be in a strong defensive position since that road is the only approach a large group could take;

- there were no reports or even rumours of a Greenskin band in the area – wherever they came from, they came directly to Vorberg, bypassing any other targets;
- the only Greenskins who are familiar with Vorberg and who know about the cave are the ones who attacked twelve years ago and killed his mother and sister.

Characters should make a **Routine (+10%) Perception Test**. On a success they notice that all the time he's talking, Maxli is playing with the pendant round his neck (see above; if the PCs have not noticed it before, let them make the relevant rolls now). Any PC keeping an eye on Andreas or who makes a **Hard (-20%) Perception Test** notices that while Maxli is talking, Andreas observes him intently, with a pained, emotional expression on his face.

After Maxli has summarised what they know, he pauses to allow the PCs to ask any questions. Then Max has a proposal. He says they don't know why the Greenskins have come back and why they don't attack directly like before. It could be that they are playing with the village, terrorising them. Or it could be

that there aren't as many and so they are attacking opportunistically. Either way, it is important to find out as much about them as possible: how many they are, who is leading them and so on. Max suggests that his son lead the PCs on a reconnaissance of the camp. Maxli knows one other, secret way up The Horned Monk that's accessible to a small group and will bring them up behind the ridge, granting a view of the cave where the Greenskins are expected to be. Because the approach is round the side of the hill, the entire sortie should take a day. Once the PCs have come back with the information, they can collectively decide what to do. If they see a chance to undertake something, they should, of course, try it.

The PCs probably have questions, although at this stage neither Maxes nor Andreas have many answers. Andreas and the guards have to stay in the village to help protect it if there's an attack, but Max stresses how well his son knows the woods. Maxli will modestly concede that he knows his way round. If the PCs try to get payment, Max will look angry, his son disappointed and Andreas regard them with utter contempt, but promises of unspecified reward will be made.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE SORTIE

The PCs spend the night at The Cowardly Orc, but are woken by Klaus before first light. They should now say what they are taking with them on the journey. Going downstairs they see Maxli and Andreas breakfasting together. As they enter the room, Andreas says a few words to Maxli and, laying his hand on his shoulder, leaves the building. A hot, nourishing breakfast has been prepared for the PCs and Klaus is an attentive server, both to them and to Maxli, who often has a kind word for him.

As soon as they're finished eating, Maxli leads them out into the first light. After leaving the village and a short walk through the fields, the party enters the forest. PCs with appropriate skills (e.g. Trade (Farmer) or Outdoor Survival) will notice that this part of the forest is cultivated for firewood, fruit and for pigs to roam in. Light has dawned in earnest by the time they reach a charcoal-burner's cottage. The cottage is well-tended but currently unoccupied: Maxli goes to check on the owners, Old Tom and his wife Lady Johanna, but there's no sign of struggle so Maxli assumes (correctly) they just went to

town. PCs can search the cottage for items they might have forgotten or not have, although Maxli will insist they leave payment on the kitchen table. The GM can make available anything s/he thinks is reasonable. Suggestions include: rope, axes, arrows, traps, lanterns, rations, herbs and one or two healing poultices.

Old Tom is not really old – that’s just a name traditionally given to whoever owns this cottage. Old Tom’s wife is always a herbalist and is given the honorific Lady Johanna. She tends to the village’s sick and delivers the babies. If you have *Shades of Empire*, then treat Lady Johanna as one of the Hedgefolk (pages 55-71). Max’s first wife is the daughter of the current Lady’s predecessor, who died some years ago. She is not related to the current one.

After the cottage the forest turns wild and soon a rock ‘wall’ rises to their right – the edge of the Horned Monk. They continue through the forest, keeping the wall on their right until, about two hours after they left the village, Maxli seems to disappear behind a rocky outcrop. As they follow him round, they can see a crack in the cliff face up which they can clamber.

CHAPTER EIGHT: AMBUSH!

After about an hour of hard scrambling, Maxli tells the PCs that they’re almost at the tree-line. Just beyond that is the ridge, from which they’ll be able to look down on the Greenskin camp.

At this point the PCs should make an **Average (+0%) Perception Test**. Those who succeed by less than 3 DoS hear someone following them. Those who succeed by 3 or more also notice movement up ahead (but further away).

If the PCs mention the noise behind Maxli, he nods, whispers for them to

PCs with Scale Sheer Surface skill make the climb automatically. Others must make an **Average (+0%) Agility Test**. A failure means the PC takes **1 Wound**, ignoring **TB** and **AP**, to a random location: he’s hit his head, fallen on his arm, been generally beaten up or twisted his ankle or knee. Only the last result (leg) has any further effect: if the PC has to run during the subsequent day, he must pass a **Routine (+10%) Toughness Test** or else suffer **-1 Movement**. A successful test means the PC can run normally, but even then, just the attempt means the PC cannot naturally heal that **Wound** on the same day.

At this point, the party needs to determine a marching order (Maxli goes in front) and the PCs should tell the GM what equipment they have ready, but they will need one hand free because of the terrain.

It’s approaching mid-morning by this stage and the weather is getting warm. In addition, the slope is steep and treacherous underfoot. Inexperienced outdoorsmen will be slipping and cursing their way up the hill.

stop, then slips away. If not, he tells them to stop and slips away on his own initiative. A few minutes later they hear someone shout in surprise and see Maxli drag Klaus out of the brush. Klaus has been following the party because Maxli is his hero and he wants to help. He simply refuses to go back and any more vigorous attempt to persuade him runs the risk of provoking a loud outburst of rage. Let the PCs debate what to do with Maxli, but Klaus won’t go back alone and they have no one to spare to go with him, so ultimately he will have to come along. The PCs should

determine where Klaus is going to be in the marching order.

Shortly after setting off again, the PCs glimpse gaps in the trees ahead: the tree-line before the ridge. The PC directly behind Maxli should then make an **Average (+0%) Perception Test** (+10% if he previously heard a noise up ahead or if another PC did so and mentioned it). If the PC makes the roll, he sees someone release an arrow towards Maxli and has half an action to react. If he pushes Maxli out of the way, then the arrow still strikes home but Maxli is only badly injured and will need medical attention. Otherwise, Maxli is killed. If the PC fails the roll, then he sees Maxli shot and killed and the shooter make a break for it up the hill.

The shooter is a humanoid figure, somewhat under average human height, and is in a line of fire for half an action before trees prevent a shot. Even so, shooting him is **Very Hard (-30%)** due to cover and terrain and the target is over 40 yards away.

It will take the shooter and any pursuers 5 rounds to reach the tree-line. In each round roll an **Opposed Agility Test**. Characters with an appropriate outdoor skill or talent (e.g. Rover) get a one-off +10%. A pursuing character must win two more contests than the shooter in order to catch him, modified by one up or down for every difference in **Movement** (remember potential injuries from climbing the cliff). For every round the PCs fail to pursue, the shooter automatically wins the contest (note: checking Maxli is dead or binding his wounds takes one round).

If the shooter wins all 5 contests, then the PCs reach the tree-line just in time to see him disappear over the ridge, shouting for help.

If the shooter wins 4 contests, then the PCs see the shooter up ahead in the open. They have half a round to act before he makes it to the ridge, perhaps giving them time to shoot him (no terrain or cover penalties; he's about 38 yards away).

If the shooter wins 3 contests, then the PCs see him up ahead in the open. They have one round to act before he makes it to the ridge. They can either continue the pursuit for one round in the hope of catching him just before the ridge or they can try shooting him (no terrain or cover penalties; he's about 26 yards away).

If the shooter wins 2 contests, then he's just ahead of them as they come out of the trees. They can either continue the pursuit for two rounds or try shooting him (no terrain or cover penalties; he's initially about 10 yards away, then 24 in the next round).

If the PCs fail to catch him, the shooter, who is Johanna's Half-Orc child, Gregor, warns his mother about them. The PCs have a bit of time. If they flee, they will have failed and will have to outrun a small group of Goblin pursuers, leaving Maxli and Klaus to their fates. If they don't run, either Maxli (if alive) or alternatively an **Easy (+20%) Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) Test** reveals that the best option is to fortify the ridge and send Klaus for help. They then face a Thermopylae-style battle until help comes from the village (led by Andreas and a reinvigorated Willie) several hours later. Depending on how well the PCs do, the villagers will take more or fewer casualties, although they will eventually win. Max Snr will have stayed in the village with the older men to 'protect' the women. If Johanna survives, the truth about the past may come out. In this case, she and Willie then confront him and the outraged village quickly

turns violent. The labourers refuse his calls for help, so he offers the PCs money to save him from the mob.

Gregor's pendant prevents his killing by burning its Fate Point, so he will probably end up the PCs' captive. In any case, the GM should describe him roughly in the following terms:

He looks like a powerfully-built teenager, but his skin is sallow and his heavy brows are topped by a sloped forehead, which in turn tapers off into a head of sparse, greasy black hair. He has a pronounced under-bite, so that two overly large, sharp teeth poke up over his top lip. His nose is snout-like and he has deep-set, piggish eyes.

Allow the players to speculate on what Gregor is. The description should leave open the possibility that he's a mutant or Turnskin (see *Tome of Corruption*, pages 101-2). Someone with the Common Knowledge (Greenskins) skill (see *Old World Bestiary*, page 77) or, if you're not using that skill, with experience of Orcs or the pit-fighting/criminal world will recognise him as a Half-Orc. An **Average (0%) Test** against the skill or **Intelligence** reveals that he's about half the age he looks (Orcs grow up fast).

For more on Half-Orcs in *WFRP* see *Warystone* #20, although it isn't necessary to run this adventure. The detail about Orcs growing up quickly has been added by the author, who feels that Orcish society would not have survived in such a violent form if Orcs went through a lengthy period of weakness. Needless to say, this precludes theories about fungus.

Gregor will have to be restrained and stopped from screaming somehow and if Maxli is dead, then a devastated Klaus will have to be kept from killing him. If Gregor is searched or given medical

attention, then the PCs find a pendant like Maxli's. An **Easy (+20%)** or **Average (+0%) Magical Sense Test** indicates that the pendant is magical or has recently exhausted its magic, as the case may be.

In order to interrogate Gregor the PCs should keep him away from the ridge so that any cries for help can't be heard. The GM should remember that Gregor's just a kid. He'll be fiercely protective of his mother, but **Easy** to intimidate or trick (+20% to **Intimidate** or **Charm Tests** to deceive). He's also not very bright. He'll let slip various relevant comments if questioned, with more information to be given for good roleplaying and successful use of relevant skills:

- he'll keep threatening that his "mama" will zap the PCs and that Morkar will eat them; he might also refer to his sister;
- he claims there are 'hundreds and hundreds' of Orcs in their group: an **Average (+0%) Common Knowledge (Greenskins) Test** shows it's unusual for Orcs to use numbers beyond one, two, 'loads' and 'loads and loads';
- he's very offended if called a Greenskin or Orc – mama says he's better than them;
- if asked where he got his pendant, he'll first refuse to answer but then say his mama gave it to him;
- doesn't know why they came to the village: mama brought them here and she's always right, no matter what Morkar and the others say – after all, the stupid Orcs normally fight each other all the time but they not when mama's in charge;
- mama has told him that the villagers deserve to die, but he doesn't know more plans, just that they'll "be sorry";

- he didn't like what happened to Dieter, because he liked him, but mama knows best;
- (if the PCs have reconnoitred the camp and ask about the stew:) he doesn't know anything about it – it's something Mama and Kati take care of and it's only for the Greenskins.

It might occur to the PCs to use Gregor's and Maxli's pendants to show them they're linked somehow. The PCs will have to go about this very cleverly for it to have a good outcome: even if they accept that the pendants must be from the same person, both parties will assume that the other has somehow robbed or exploited their 'mama' and become very angry and upset.

CHAPTER NINE: RECONNAISSANCE

At some point the PCs will have to do what they were sent for: reconnoitre the camp. They can get a partial view from the ridge down to the base of the peaks, where the camp is set up outside a cave, but in order to get a better look someone will have to sneak closer. The camp is about 200 yards away and the slope is steep and overgrown with bushes (The Horned Monk is only 'bald' from a distance). The PC can approach the camp in six roughly 30-yard stages and each time must make a **Challenging (-10%) Silent Move Test, Opposed** to the Goblin guards' **Perception**. (Use the profile for Goblins, modified by the **Sneak** career as per *WFRP* pages 228-9.) The guards' **Perception Tests** start at **Very Hard (-30%)**, with the difficulty level dropping by one for every further stage the PC approaches. Even if the Goblin hears something, however, it may not understand what's happening. No attack is expected from that direction and things frequently move in the undergrowth or dislodge from the slope anyway. In this case, the PC should make a **Routine (+10%) Concealment Test, Opposed** to the Goblin's **Perception Test** (rolled at one less difficulty than the original **Perception Test**). If the PC wins, the Goblin dismisses the sound as unimportant. If the guard wins, he raises the alarm and gives chase.

At each stage of approach the PC should also make **Perception Tests**. For the first 4 stages, the PC can only check against sight – it's too far to make out any words. For the last two stages, he should check separately against hearing as well, although what is understood depends on the PC's language ability.

The **Perception Tests** for looking begin at **Average (+0%)**, with the amount of information learnt determined by the DoS according to the table below – each result also gives the information listed for lesser DoS. The PC gets +10% to these **Tests** for every stage of approach after the first (so approaching 90 yards would grant the PC +20% to the **Perception Test**).

The GM should adjust the number of Goblinoids according to the strength of the party. There should be far too many to tackle en masse, but few enough that they must divide their forces in a way that gives piecemeal attacks a chance of success. One more Orc than there are PCs, plus 5-8 Goblins per Orc, in addition to the named cast, ought to be suitable. About half the Goblins should be **Sneaks** and half the Orcs **Brutes**. Otherwise use the standard profiles from *WFRP* pages 229-30. Note also that Johanna is not an experienced military commander, so the GM should let her make mistakes.

DoS	Information
0	A rough figure for the number of Greenskins (e.g. 30-40).
1	A rough figure for the numbers of Goblins and Orcs (e.g. 5 or 6 Orcs and about 30 Goblins)
2	You can make out some activity: some are packing equipment, some are eating, and there is no violence.
3	The Goblins are divided into groups, each ordered about by one Orc. They are very disciplined. There are also three figures (one noticeably bigger than the others) in the centre of the camp, outside the cave, around a cauldron.
4	Exact numbers for Goblins and Orcs; the group at the centre consists of two humans and a Black Orc.
5	You can make out the activity in detail: each group of Goblinoids is taking turns to have breakfast from the cauldron; as one group eats, another prepares to move out and another seems to be about to sleep; they are very disciplined. The two humans are one older and one younger woman and they are serving stew from the cauldron.
6	The humans aren't restrained and the older woman seems to be telling the Greenskins what to do.

Listening in to the camp is resolved somewhat differently, since it partly depends on the PC's language skills. If the PC is in the fifth, penultimate stage of approach, then he can hear the Greenskins' conversation. If he can speak Goblin Tongue, then he should make a **Challenging (-10%) Speak Language (Goblin Tongue) Test**:

- on a fail, he can't make out anything because of cross-talk;
- on a success of fewer than 2 DoS he understands that the Orcs are telling the Goblins to eat up their stew and arranging guard duties and patrols;
- on a success of 2 or more DoS, the PC can make out exactly where the guards will be and hears references to "mum an' 'er luvverly stoo".

The stew in fact contains a herbal concoction called 'Mother Knows Best'. Anyone who eats it must make an **Average (+0%) Willpower Test**. Note that these herbs affect the mind, not the body, so the Resistance to Poison talent provides no bonus (although the GM may provide a +10% bonus for talents like Strong-Minded instead). On a failure the victim regards whomever he

thinks made the stew with filial loyalty. He'll follow her instructions and defend her to the hilt. This does not make him stupid, anymore than a son's loyalty to his mother makes him stupid, and he won't necessarily agree with what he's asked to do and may object. But ultimately 'family' comes first. The effect lasts for a day and is renewed automatically if the victim eats more stew by the end of that period. If not, the effect gradually weakens, starting with a more conditional loyalty in the second day (and another chance to resist the effects of eating the stew, but at a -10% penalty), to reluctant consent in the third (no penalty) and finally freedom on the fourth, after which the character gets +10% bonus for future **Tests** against the stew, cumulative for each time he's 'freed' himself.

If the PC makes an additional **Average (+0%) Perception Test** (+10% for Acute Hearing), he can make out Reikspiel being spoken by the older woman, although at this distance he can't understand what is being said.

If the PC gets as close as he can (the last stage of approach), then he can make

another **Speak Language (Goblin Tongue) Test**, this time **Easy (+20%)**, with possible results as above. In addition, the PC can make a **Routine (+10%) Speak Language (Reikspiel) Test** (with an additional +10% if he also speaks Goblin Tongue):

- on a fail, he can't make out anything because of cross-talk and occasional mixed-in Goblin phrases;
- on a success of fewer than 2 DoS, he understands generally that the woman is berating the Black Orc, calling him an 'idiot' and referring to 'newcomers' and 'until nightfall';
- on a success of 2 or more DoS, the PC understands that the older woman (who is referred to as 'mama') is berating the Black Orc for having left his post early the day before: scouts have reported that people might have slipped into the village before sundown. The Black Orc, who's called Morkar, is not to leave the road until nightfall.

This is the information available upon first investigation. If the PC waits to observe a little longer, have him specify roughly how long (a few minutes, several minutes or longer – although the PC can change his mind at each stage and leave):

- after 'a few minutes' half the Greenskins leave the camp along the Old Hill Road under Morkar's leadership;
- over the course of 'several minutes', another quarter follows in a series of small groups, each under the command of an Orc (they're going to set up sentries);

- in those same 'several minutes', the final quarter are divided between a few guards and the rest who sleep;
- if the PC stays longer, then on an **Average (+0%) Speak Language (Reikspiel) Test**, he overhears the older woman telling the younger one, 'Kati', to go look for Gregor, who's wandered off again; in any case, Kati starts to walk in the direction of the PC!

Should the PC leave before Kati starts heading his way, he must repeat in reverse order the **Silent Move Tests, Opposed** to the guards' **Perception**. If, however, Kati is on the move, his position becomes much pricklier. The PC must make an **Average (+0%) Concealment Test, Opposed** to Kati's **Perception Tests**. She is actively looking for a humanoid figure and thus gets +10% to her rolls, with the base difficulty determined by the relative distances (if the PC had advanced two of the six stages, then Kati rolls first against a base difficulty of **Hard (-20%)**, then in the next round **Challenging (-10%)**, etc.). It is particularly dangerous for the PC to try to move in these circumstances: instead of Concealment the PC must make a **Hard (-20%) Silent Move Test, Opposed** to Kati's **Perception Tests**. A clever PC will let her pass and then follow her, in which case he must make **Average (+0%) Silent Move Tests, Opposed** to her **Perception Tests** (at a -20% penalty because she's looking elsewhere). Kati's clamber up the slope also disguises any noises the characters make as far as the guards below are concerned, so they don't get a **Perception Test**.

CHAPTER TEN: GIRL INTERRUPTER

Once the scout returns, the group has a wide range of options. Strictly speaking, they only have to return to the village and report. But a good group will have

worked out by now that Maxli's mother is the head of the Greenskin band and she is the one who is inflicting the siege on the village. Remember too that Max

has told them to take action if they see the opportunity. This should all require discussion, but if that drags or begins to go round in circles or if the GM otherwise feels it would be dramatically appropriate (e.g. if the PCs still haven't discovered that there's something unusual about these Greenskins), then they are interrupted by Kati's arrival.

Obviously, depending on what the party's scout did, Kati may be on the way anyway or even ahead of him. Adapt the encounter appropriately.

Kati has no reason to suspect anyone hostile is up here, so she is calling out Gregor's name, and the party will get two **Perception Tests** to hear her before she is likely to notice them. The first is **Challenging (-10%)** but the second **Routine (+10%)**. If they make the first, then they hear her coming in time to take action before she can spot them. If they only make the second, then any activity (e.g. setting an ambush) has a chance of being heard or spotted, requiring the PCs to make **Routine (+10%) Silent Move** and/or **Concealment Tests, Opposed** to Kati's **Routine (+10%) Perception Test** (although the trees provide cover to the PCs, Kati has the advantage of actively looking for someone). If the PCs fail both **Perception Tests**, then Kati automatically finds them and sees they have Gregor. She will try to sneak away and warn her mother: she must roll a **Routine (+10%) Silent Move Test, Opposed** to the PCs' **Perception Test** at **Average (+0%)**, or **Routine (+10%)** if they have explicitly said they're setting a guard.

If the PCs fight Kati, they will find her a more dangerous opponent than she looks (although an **Average (+0%) Magical Sense Test** will reveal that she's a magic user and passing it by 2 DoS or more will identify her as a tribal shaman), but they should be able to

catch her. Fortunately the sounds of battle will not carry to the camp unless the PCs are foolish enough to engage her near the ridge. Note that the magic in Kati's pendant was used up when she was four years old: if the PCs do something that would kill her, then she's dead.

If they capture her, she turns out to be a tougher nut to crack than her half-brother but also knows much more about her mother and the village. The interrogation should be roleplayed, and backed up with **Intimidate** and **Charm Tests** modified by that roleplaying. For example, Kati cares about Gregor, so threatening him will net a bonus to an Intimidate test, or pointing out the parallels between the fates of Dieter and the children twelve years ago might get a bonus to a **Charm Test** to get her to talk. Kati knows that:

- her father betrayed the women and infants twelve years ago;
- Erich was part of the betrayal and deserved what he got;
- the villagers are to feel the same terror the women did before they all die;
- the stew pacifies the Greenskins;
- her mother will lead the tribe to glory (in this case, Kati isn't so sure – she's trying to reconcile the spirits' promises to her with not having to take the leadership from her mother; in fact she knows that the tribe has been heavily depleted since her mother repurposed it for her vengeance crusade).

The most effective way of getting Kati's help, however, is using Maxli's pendant to prove he survived the original attack. (If Maxli is alive, he will also be willing to believe she is his sister when he sees her pendant, and thus also begrudgingly accept Gregor.) Kati has fond early memories of him and if he is alive she will be eager to tell her mother and if

not then she will be horrified at what has happened. In any case, she will be

willing to act as go-between in a parley.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: RESOLUTIONS

In the end the PCs face a wide range of options as to what to do next. It is hoped that the GM has enough detail on the NPCs' motivations to craft an appropriate, morally complex and maybe even moving resolution. There follow some suggestions, which the GM should adapt and combine as needed.

Returning to the Village

Going back as a whole group is only an option if Maxli is dead, since even alive he is in no fit state to travel and it isn't safe to leave him there. The other problem is that the PCs probably have Gregor and possibly Kati captive. Either they can bring the captive(s) back to the village with them or some of them can stay behind with the captives/Maxli.

If some of the party stay behind and Kati has not yet come looking for Gregor, then the GM might have this happen while the others are away, switching between the two halves of the group when each reaches a cliff-hanger.

Unless they follow a different route back to the village (requiring a **Challenging (-10%) Navigation Test** to avoid getting lost in the woods), the PCs encounter Morkar and half the Greenskin warband burning Old Tom's cottage down en route to the road. It requires two **Routine (+10%) Silent Move Tests** to pass by unnoticed or one **Routine (+10%) Concealment Test** to wait for them to leave, **Opposed** to the Orcs' **Hard (-20%) Perception Test** (they are distracted).

In playtesting the PCs sent Klaus back alone, later finding his disembowelled corpse nailed to the remnants of the burnt-out cottage's door.

The PCs' reception when they eventually reach the village will strongly depend on what news they bring. The villagers will gather as they arrive and pester them with questions about Maxli and his absence. Whatever they answer, the PCs will soon be asked into a private meeting with Max and Andreas in the Master Library. If Maxli is dead then both will be emotionally shattered, although it takes an **Average (+0%) Perception Test** to notice this in Andreas's case. If Maxli lives, then their first priority will be getting him back and Andreas will personally lead his guards with the PCs to do so. While the others are putting together a stretcher for Maxli, Andreas will ask to be taken to reconnoitre the camp for himself.

When deciding what to do, Andreas will counsel the decapitation of the tribe (see below) on the theory that without leadership the Greenskins will move on. He will order all the men armed and onto the stockade, leaving either Juergen or the wounded Maxli in charge of the village's defence. The other guards he will take with him and the PCs to execute the decapitation. It may well be, of course, that in the process they and Andreas discover more about Johanna, Kati and their history than the PCs had previously (perhaps by capturing Kati if she hasn't been captured already). If Maxli is dead, then Andreas will dismiss any thoughts of parley or similar and just want to kill (although he'll justify it by pointing to Dieter's death as evidence that Johanna can't be reasoned with). If Maxli is alive, Andreas might be persuaded to behave differently.

Even if the PCs have found out the truth of what happened twelve years ago, it would be under most

circumstances a huge mistake to publicly accuse Max. They simply won't be believed, except perhaps by Enid (Beate will turn on any stranger who accuses her brother), and may find themselves driven from the village with a warband of Greenskins outside. Even Willie will keep silent out of renewed shame, but that night will go back to the bottle.

If the PCs have Gregor with them, this won't be accepted as proof and nothing he says will be believed. Max will order him locked in a tiny cage in case they can use him as a hostage.

If the PCs come back with Kati, then a different scenario is possible. Kati is clever and will remain silent unless the PCs have a plan that requires her to speak. She will, however, take a good opportunity to kill Max (with no care for her own life), assuming she isn't privy to some other plan. Meanwhile, both Max and Willie will recognise her and, depending on how the PCs play the situation, Willie may gather the courage to expose Max. Even here, though, the village might split down the middle between those who believe Max and those who believe Willie and internecine fighting might make it too weak to resist the Greenskins. Alternatively, the GM might rule that the village turns against Max, who is abandoned by Horst in fear and Andreas in disgust, and is chased into his house, where he is burnt alive.

Parley

This is the most obvious option if the PCs have captured Kati. They also have Gregor, so they can use one as a go-between (or to ensure safe passage for a PC envoy) and another as a hostage. Any PC who enters the camp will be offered stew by Johanna. Again, pointing out that Maxli is still alive (or that he was until Gregor killed him) is probably the best way of bringing Johanna round. In one point she will

not give in, however: she must see Max suffer and die. She will also demand guarantees from the PCs that any agreement will be held to, perhaps by holding one of the PCs hostage.

This was the option chosen in playtesting. One PC went with Kati to parley with Johanna and became her advocate after eating the stew, but Johanna was devastated when she discovered that one son had killed the other. She agreed to leave the village in peace, so long as the PCs delivered Max to her 'for trial'. The PCs returned to the village and, after telling a distraught Max of his son's death, persuaded him to visit the grave. There they notified Johanna and handed him over after a stand-off between the entire Greenskin warband and Andreas's guards. Helena inherited Max's property and Franz used the threat of exposing the PCs as Goblinoid collaborators to get out of paying them their reward.

Decapitation

The PCs may try to assassinate Johanna, assuming that she's the one who cares about the village and so without her the Greenskins will go elsewhere. There is some truth to this, but only if Kati is killed (or already dead) as well. If they only kill the mother, then the tribe's spirits will tell Kati that the time has come to fulfil her destiny. Her first goal will be to avenge her mother and no parley will be possible, partly because of her rage and partly because she will have committed herself entirely to the tribe and the spirits. Killing only Johanna, in other words, will make the villagers' situation worse.

In any case, assassinating one or both is possible, but, of course, difficult. It would have to be done during the day because at night the Greenskins are at virtually full strength and, naturally, have Night Vision. But during the day both

Johanna and Kati are awake and often in the cave which has only one entrance. Disguise, perhaps magical, would likely be essential, and even then the chance of getting away is slim. A safer option would be to shoot one of the two from some point on the slope above the camp (see the rules for approaching the camp, above). It would take some time for the Greenskins to arrange a proper pursuit, but on the other hand the PC would likely only have one shot at one target.

Terror Against Terror

Combat-hungry players might want to fight a guerrilla war against the Greenskins. This might look like suicide, but it has a better chance of succeeding than is immediately apparent. The Goblins strongly outnumber the Orcs

and aren't courageous. Things have been going poorly for the warband for some time anyway, and only the stew is keeping them loyal to Johanna. In addition, Morkar is not happy with the current conditions and would gladly take over himself. Should the PCs manage to sow fear and terror within the tribe by selective ambushes, psychological tricks etc., then confusion would reign. Somehow interfering with the daily ration of Mother Knows Best would break the tribe very quickly. A coup against Johanna would be in the offing and Kati, divided between loyalty to her mother and the whisperings of the spirits, would act indecisively and too late to stop Morkar taking over, then plundering the village fields in one night's orgy of destruction before moving on.

EPILOGUE

The possible outcomes fall into three or four broad classes, each of which implies a different epilogue. The PCs could fail to stop the Greenskins; they could get rid of them without uncovering and exposing Max's crime or they could both get rid of the warband and expose Max. There is also the question of whether Maxli survived.

If the PCs fail to stop the Greenskins, but themselves survive, then they've probably fled. After a terrifying pursuit and trek through the forest, they eventually reach civilisation, bruised, battered and perhaps fewer than they set out. Conscience-stricken PCs might try to fetch help. Unless they're very well connected, this will take some time. In any case, they arrive back to see carnage on the road. Driven to desperation, the villagers tried to break out and make their way to town but were hacked to pieces. The GM may want to let Andreas somehow survive and have him haunt the PCs' steps as he seeks vengeance for the death of his beloved.

A mix of guilt, shame and frustrated professional ambition will also make Franz eager to avenge his daughter.

With luck, however, the Greenskins are gone and the key question is whether Max has been exposed or not. If Max is alive and neither betrayed nor exposed, then he pays the PCs the agreed amount plus a bonus to escort, alongside Andreas and his guards, a new dowry of hemp to town. There the PCs can collect Franz's share of the reward. Andreas and his guards then bid them farewell and return to Vorberg to complete their contract.

Blackmailing Max is unlikely to work: witnesses are either compromised (Johanna and Kati) or a known drunk (Willie) and any other evidence requires someone to vouch for its authenticity. Only the word of extremely well-connected PCs might be believed over Max's. Instead, the group will just make an influential enemy.

If Max is killed or disgraced, then Andreas, the guards and the PCs (along with the now unemployed labourers) escort Helena back to her father, who still only pays the PCs his half of the reward and nothing at all if he can leverage their parleying with the Greenskins. If both Maxes are dead, then Helena inherits Max's properties. If Maxli is alive, then he sells them to her soon after at Andreas's urging and he and Andreas leave Vorberg together. The GM may have the PCs encounter the two of them at some later date.

The PCs might also meet the Greenskin warband again, whoever is leading it.

They might hear wild rumours about an Orc boss who is not really an Orc but an ordinary human woman. This 'Joan of Orc' is either said to be a tragic human serving girl who was betrayed by her aristocratic lover or their daughter who has taken her mother's name in tribute. To avenge the betrayal, 'Joan' has united a hundred Greenskin warbands for the greatest WAAAGH! the Old World has seen in a century.

Lastly, if the PCs parleyed with the Greenskins, this might somehow become known and they'll find themselves the target of vicious rumours and even Witch Hunters.

EXPERIENCE

The values below are suggestions designed to be awarded differentially so as to encourage initiative. Alternatively the GM should give 200-350 xp for the successful completion of the adventure.

Chapter One: The Wedding

Good roleplaying at wedding (e.g. taking part in competition): 10
Impressing Max and/or Franz: 5-10
Successfully calming the two men down: 5

Chapter Two: The Journey

Good roleplaying on journey: 5-10
Befriending Andreas: 5

Chapter Three: The Battlefield

Each piece of information deduced without help: 5

Chapter Four: Arrival

Taking care of Helena without prompting: 5
Speaking to Maxli/Beate/Willie: 5 each
Assessing the significance of Maxli's pendant: 5 per detail (up to 20)

Chapter Five: Asking Around

Investigating on own initiative: 10
Investigating at Bibi's request: 5
Investigating after a promise of more reward: 0
Finding out what happened 12 years ago: 10-20, depending on the detail.

Chapter Six: The Plan

Assessing the significance of Maxli's pendant: 5 per as-yet unidentified detail (up to 20)
Posing good questions: 5

Chapter Seven: The Sortie

Picking up something that later proves useful: 5

Chapter Eight: Ambush!

Hearing Klaus: 5
Hearing Gregor the first time: 5
Saving Maxli: 20
Catching Gregor: 10
Finding Gregor's pendant and realising its significance: 10
Questioning Gregor: 10

Chapter Nine: Reconnaissance

Sneaking up to the camp: 5-20
Gathering information on the camp through observation: 5-20
Gathering information on the camp through listening: 10-20

Chapter Ten: Girl Interrupter

Killing Kati: 5
Catching Kati 10
Questioning Kati: 10
Getting Kati on side: 20

Chapter Eleven: Resolutions

Successful resolution: 100-200

THE CAST

Maximilian Steiger Snr

Career: Merchant (Ex-Peasant, Ex-Tradesman)

Race: Human (age 50)

Maximilian Steiger never knew his mother, who died giving birth to him, but he had nothing but contempt for his father. Max wasn't treated badly, but his father paid him no attention at all, instead expending all his energies on futile get-rich schemes. The only bright spot in Max's childhood was his friendship with a pretty and fascinatingly precocious charcoal-burner's daughter called Johanna, but even there part of the charm was his father's disapproval of such a lowly friend: it was one of the few occasions where he seemed to care what his son did. The last straw for Max was a scheme to turn Vorberg into a pilgrimage destination by claiming that the hill's appearance was a sign that Sigmar once slept in the cave and renaming the hill and village Sigmarsberg and Sigmarsruhe respectively. It swallowed the family's fortune and as the bailiffs arrived, Max slipped away and started a new life working the boats of the empire as a handyman. He still regales anyone who listens with stories about his one visit to the great city of Marienburg. Max soon discovered a talent for wheeling and dealing and relished the fact that where his father had been incompetent, he was a master. By the age of 24 he was wealthy enough to return to Vorberg and buy back his father's house and lands in triumph. His father had died of grief and shame, but Johanna was still there and eager to marry. The independent streak that so attracted a trapped and unhappy child, however, soon rankled with the newly confident merchant. When the Greenskins came, Max did his best to lead the village's defence and he hoped for Willie's return with help. But the fear grew that he would lose everything he had worked so hard for, and, trusting to his abilities as a dealmaker, he called a parley with the Orc boss. It was not an easy decision to betray the women – he still has nightmares about his little daughter and he's become noticeably more religious since the attack – but ultimately he can justify it to himself as a necessary if unfortunate cost of doing business. Max is desperate for respectability and with that sort of woman by his side he would never have attained it.

Use a similar profile for Franz Raffke.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
34	29	35	44	47	66	55	62
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	13	3	5	4	0	3	0

Skills: Charm +10%, Common Knowledge (Empire +10%, Wasteland), Concealment, Drive, Evaluate +10%, Gamble, Gossip +20%, Haggle +10%, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Read/Write +10%, Ride, Row, Secret Language (Guild Tongue), Speak Language (Reikspiel), Swim, Trade (Merchant +10%, Shipwright)

Talents: Dealmaker, Hardy, Flee!, Mimic, Savvy, Streetwise, Suave, Super Numerate

Weapons: Short Sword, Knife

Trappings: Slightly Out-Of-Fashion Fancy Clothing, Big House.

Andreas Kessler

Career: Sergeant (Ex-Tradesman (incomplete), Ex-Mercenary, Ex-Veteran)

Race: Human (age 34)

Andreas has experienced a lot in his relatively short life. He grew up in Pfeildorf and was indentured at a young age as an armourer's apprentice. The man was cruel, but Andreas was thrilled by the stories of the tough warriors who frequented the workshop and had visited so many places and done so many things. One day, when a mercenary company was in town, Andreas stole some arms from his employer and joined up. The company was on its way to Tilea and over the next years Andreas grew up under canvas, fighting the wars of the city states. He lost his romanticism about war but became a devout follower of Myrmidia, whom he venerates for civilising his personal vocation of war and giving it some sort of meaning. Eventually the mercenary company was dissolved and Andreas took his share and returned home to the Empire, determined to make his own way. Since then he has made a good living arranging small-scale security for affluent clients and has three people working for him. Andreas values his professionalism above all else, but that is being unexpectedly tested now that he has fallen in love with Maxli, the serious, honest young son of his latest employer. Although Andreas has a history of passionate relationships amongst the mercenaries of Tilea, the risks of battle always made them as short and casual as they were intense. With Maxli, Andreas has, for the first time in his life, a chance at more lasting love, and that has this very independent, very self-controlled man caught in an unwonted turmoil of hope and fear.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
62	51	51	52	52*	39	46	52
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	17	5	5	4	0	2	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics), Animal Care, Command, Common Knowledge (The Empire, Tilea), Consume Alcohol, Dodge Blow +20%, Drive, Evaluate, Gamble, Gossip, Haggle +10%, Intimidate +10%, Perception +20%, Ride, Search, Secret Language (Battle Tongue), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Tilean), Trade (Armoury, Weaponsmith)

Talents: Dealmaker, Disarm, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Gunpowder, Two-handed), Street Fighter, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun, Warrior Born, Very Resilient, Very Strong

Armour: Helmet, Sleeved Mail Coat (**Ag:** 42*)

Armour Points: Head 2, Arms 2, Body 2, Legs 2

Weapons: Sword, Dagger, Shield

Trappings: Riding Horse, 11 *gc* cash

Villager

Career: Peasant

Race: Human

Use this profile for male/female villagers, labourers and (with adjustments) minor characters like Lutz, Bibi and Klaus. Labourers have the profile of male villagers, plus the characteristics/skills marked with an asterisk.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
31/22	34/32	35(40*)/29	38/36	34/39	29/33	27/36	22/35
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	14	3(4*)/2	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Animal Care, Charm, Common Knowledge (Empire), Concealment, Consume Alcohol*, Drive, Gamble/Performer (Dancer or Singer), Gossip, Outdoor Survival*, Set Trap, Scale Sheer Surface*, Silent Move, Speak Language (Reikspiel), Trade (Farmer/Cook, Other*)

Talents: Hardy, Fleel, Warrior Born (**WS:** 36)*

Weapon: Hand Weapon, Knife

Trappings: Sturdy Clothes, d5 *gc*.

Maximilian ‘Maxli’ Steiger Jnr

Career: Hunter (Ex-Woodsman)

Race: Human (age 25)

Maxli remembers his mother well. He remembers the arguments between her and his father and the more frequent silences and careful attempts to stay out of each other's way. It was good that he loved the woods, because otherwise he would have had nowhere to escape to. Maxli loved his parents, but he respected them more, and when the Orc attack came he was proud to be able help the villagers fight. He was proud of how his mother led the women to apparent safety, and he tried to be strong as he bid farewell to his little sister. He was also proud of his father when the latter went out to meet the Orc boss and intimidated the creature into leaving them alone. Maybe his father lacks genuine warmth under his glib merchant's charm, but he had what it took at the right time and that is more important than any sentimental bleating. For the same reason, Maxli accepted it when his father showed little emotion over the death of his wife and mourned that of his daughter privately. Maxli is very conscious of his responsibilities (and bears Klaus's hero-worship of him with patience and a self-deprecating smile) and is thus sorry to disappoint his father over his disinterest in the business. He understands the cold calculation of his father's marriage to Helena, but himself has recently been plunged into emotional confusion by the arrival of Andreas Kessler, whose understated confidence and glamorous background have stolen his heart entirely. Maxli is seriously considering leaving his home for the first time to be with Andreas when he goes.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
40	57	45	47	42	34	41	31
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	15	4	4	4	0	-	0*

Skills: Common Knowledge (Empire), Concealment +10%, Follow Trail +10%, Outdoor Survival, Perception +10%, Scale Sheer Surface, Search, Secret Language (Ranger), Secret Signs (Ranger), Set Trap +10%, Silent Move +10%, Swim

Talents: Hardy, Lightning Reflexes, Marksman, Night Vision, Orientation, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-Handed, Longbow), Very Resilient

Armour: Leather Jerkin

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 1, Legs 0

Weapons: Two-Handed Axe, Longbow & 10 arrows, Knife

Trappings: Worn Outdoor Clothing, 5 *gc* cash, Pendant (exhausted)*

Beate Steiger

Career: Peasant

Race: Human (age 56)

Beate was married off to a priest of Sigmar so that the latter would help her father in his pilgrimage scheme. She hoped for the life of a society lady, but the priest turned out to be dissolute and miserly. He used her as little more than a housemaid and died leaving her penniless. By that time Max had returned and was able to pay off her debts. Beate resents Max's success, her vanished dreams and her reliance on him and does everything she can to make herself feel she's better than he is.

Use the female Villager profile above.

Wilhelm/Willie 'Harefoot' Treumann

Career: Initiate of Sigmar

Race: Human (age 33)

Where Erich was vicious and resentful, Willie was bright, confident and hopeful. A devotee of Sigmar, when the Goblinoids attacked he secretly thought his time might have come. Arriving at the vanguard of the rescuing army was the greatest moment of his life. The subsequent fall was that much farther. Willie simply couldn't understand how the Greenskins could have found the cave and pestered Erich for answers. Eventually his brother told him: because Willie had failed to return on time, the real men had to make the hard decisions needed in the real world, not the fantasy one of heroism in Willie's head – it was all Willie's fault and he should never forget that. He didn't and there followed twelve years of alcoholic self-degradation. Now, however, the Greenskins are back and Erich is dead. Willie is pulling himself together and the knowledge that

there were in fact some survivors and that this attack is in some sense a just punishment, might be enough to break through Willie's shame and get him to confess.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37	32	30	37	42	37	24	39
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	13	3	3	5	0	4	-

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History, Theology), Charm, Common Knowledge (Empire), Gossip, Heal, Perception, Read/Write, Speak Language (Classical, Reikspiel)

Talents: Fleet Footed, Flee!, Lightning Reflexes, Public Speaking, Suave

Weapons: Warhammer (in lockbox in shrine)

Trappings: Worn Initiate's Robes, Hammer Symbol, 4 *gc*

Horst Prahlhans

Career: Proprietor

Race: Human (age 42)

Horst inherited the Sigmar's Rest, as it was then called (and from which Max's father got his pilgrimage idea), but he always thought he should be someone who mattered. He was a few years older than Erich, but growing up he made sure to keep on the right side of the more violent boy. When Max returned to Vorberg, Horst was always by his side and ready to help. It was Max, Erich and Horst (plus two others who have since died) who went to parley with the Orc boss. Horst was shocked at first when Erich suggested selling out the women, but when Max agreed Horst started to see the sense. After all, better them than everyone. But Horst's conscience nags him and to silence it he took in Klaus and tells himself so many lies about his own bravery back then that he's almost come to believe it. Certainly his young wife does, and having his own opinion of himself echoed back and amplified has done little to tether Horst to reality. It is unclear how he would react if undeniable evidence of the truth emerged.

Use the Proprietor profile from *WFRP* page 235.

Gregor 'Mama's Boy'

Career: None (Child)

Race: Half-Orc (age 8 but looks 16)

Gregor doesn't remember a time before Mama led the tribe. For him, the tribe is home and he would do anything for his mama. She has told him he's better than the Orcs and Gobbos, but he knows there's a difference between him and Kati and he sees how much time and attention their mother gives her. He often has to get away and be by himself in

the woods that he loves. But one day he'll prove himself to his mama and this attack on the village might be his chance – she seems to hate it so much and if he brought a villager's head back for her she would be happy and love him as much as she loves Kati.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30	33	31	32	30	25	23	18
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	3	3	4	0	0	1*

Skills: Concealment, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Silent Move, Speak Language (Reikspiel, Goblin Tongue),

Talents: Excellent Vision, Night Vision, Rover, Very Strong

Armour: Leather Jerkin

Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 1, Legs 0

Weapons: Short Sword, Knife, Bow & 10 Arrows

Trappings: Shabby Clothes, Pendant*

Katharina 'Kati' Steiger

Career: Shaman (Ex-Hedgecraft Apprentice, Ex-Hedge Wizard)

Race: Human (age 16)

Kati's only memories of Vorberg are happy ones of playing with her big brother. Later childhood was a nightmare of marches and hard labour, although her mother's position as the boss's concubine meant Kati was spared the abuse that killed the other human children. She is well aware of this and would give her life for her mother. By the time Kati manifested magical talent, her mother had gained control of the camp whenever the boss was away and she used the time to train Kati as well as to fill her with hate for the father who betrayed her. Unbeknownst to Johanna, however, Kati has been hearing voices from the spirits of the tribe, who have been whispering to her of a destiny as tribe-mother and granting her the magical powers to fulfil it. Kati is afraid that she will one day have to choose between her human origins and the Greenskin totems who have, apparently, adopted her.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
26	30	35	41	41	46	56	39
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	3	4	4	2	3	0*

Skills: Animal Care, Channelling +10%, Charm Animal, Common Knowledge (Empire, Greenskins), Concealment, Gossip, Outdoor Survival, Heal, Magical Sense +10%, Prepare Poisons, Perception +10%, Performance (Storytelling, Dance, Sing), Read/Write, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (Reikspiel, Goblin Tongue), Silent Move, Trade (Apothecary, Herbalism)

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Coolheaded, Divine Lore (Spirits), Meditation, Petty Magic (Hedge), Rover.

Weapons: Staff, Knife

Trappings: Worn clothes, Spell Ingredients, Pendant (exhausted)*

Divine Lore (Spirits) is from the *Old World Bestiary*, page 81. If that is unavailable, assume Kati's spells work like the following: Radiant Gaze (Light), Vision of Torment (Chaos), Spear of Myrmidia (Myrmidia) – but grants Kati's staff SB damage and Impact quality instead of Armour Piercing, Cure Disease (Shallya), and Beacon of Courage (Sigmar).

'Mother' Johanna Steiger

Career: Witch (Ex-Hedgecraft Apprentice/Ex-Hedge Wizard)

Race: Human (age 47)

Johanna's father was Old Tom, an ordinary, kind-hearted charcoal-burner, but her mother was Lady Johanna, the village's Hedgewise. Although her mother was not blessed, she recognised her daughter's magical talent early and sought to bring her up in the ways of the Hedge. Unfortunately, the girl grew up arrogant and headstrong and ill bore her mother's attempts at discipline. Instead, she set her sights on the young, ambitious Maximilian Steiger, whom she had run with as a child. Max proposed to her (some say helped along by a love potion) and young Johanna started living a life of (relative) luxury as a kept woman. Max soon started to resent her, however, perhaps because his increasing success meant that he would soon have been able to marry to better advantage and Johanna was not one to be subservient to her husband. She is sure that Max's insecurity and ambition contributed to his betrayal and she holds him in contempt for it. By luck and by magic, Johanna and their four year-old daughter survived the initial nightmarish months of captivity while all the other women and children died or were sold on as slaves. She made herself the Orc boss's favoured concubine, especially since a particular brew she put together seemed to make the tribe less fractious and more loyal to him. When she bore him a son, her position was sealed. Little did he know, the brew actually made the Orcs and Gobbos personally loyal to her and, with the support of her loyal faction, she killed the boss and his remaining allies and took over the tribe. She has since led it back to the village that betrayed her and wants a revenge that will reflect the uncertainty and terror she and the women experienced while hiding in the cave, before it finally ends in pain and death.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
26	31	34	43	41	48	50	46
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	16	3	4	4	2	8	0

Skills: Animal Care, Channelling +20%, Charm Animal, Consume Alcohol, Gossip, Haggle, Outdoor Survival, Heal +20%, Magical Sense +20%, Prepare Poisons, Perception +20%, Read/Write, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Read/Write, Set Trap, Trade (Apothecary) +20%, Trade (Herbalist) +10%, Intimidate +10%,

Charm, Search +10%, Common Knowledge (Empire, Greenskins), Ride, Swim, Speak Language (Reikspiel, Goblin Tongue).

Talents: Strong-Minded, Night Vision, Coolheaded, Petty Magic (Hedge), Rover, Hedge Magic, Mighty Missile, Witchcraft (Aethyric Armour, Acceptance of Fate, Fires of U'Zhul, Earth Blood, Bewilder)

Special Rules:

Choppa: after murdering the previous Boss, Johanna kept his Choppa to symbolise her new dominance – it counts as a Hand Weapon with the Slow quality.

Weapons: Ex-Boss's Choppa, Knife

Trappings: Robes, Fake 'Magical' Jewellery & Trinkets, Spell Ingredients

Witchcraft allows a character to learn individual Arcane spells of a Casting Number up to 15. When casting, the caster must roll an extra die which counts towards triggering Tzeentch's Curse but not towards the casting total. See *Realms of Sorcery*, page 128.

Morkar

Career: Sneak

Race: Black Orc

Morkar is the tribe's last surviving Black Orc and was the only one to fall under the influence of Mother Knows Best, becoming the leader of Johanna's rebellion. He has recently missed his daily meal, however, and is beginning to look askance at the depletion of his tribe's ranks and their strange fixation on this irrelevant village. He may decide it's time to show Mother who the daddy is.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
52	50	54	55	46*	36	55	25
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	17	5	5	4	0	0	0

Skills: Command +20%, Common Knowledge (Greenskins) +10%, Concealment, Dodge Blow, Follow Trail, Intimidate +10%, Interrogate, Navigation, Outdoor Survival +10%, Perception +20%, Ride +10%, Scale Sheer Surface +10%, Shadowing, Silent Move, Swim, Speak Language (Goblin Tongue).

Talents: Menacing, Mighty Shot, Orientation, Rapid Reload, Rover, Sharpshooter, Strike to Stun, Strike Mighty Blow, Night Vision, Street Fighting, Strike to Injure, Sure Shot, Specialist Weapon (Entangling, Two-Handed)

Special Rules:

Choppa: Heavy blade which does SB+1 damage in first round of melee and SB thereafter.

Quell Animosity: May quell infighting among Goblinoids within 12 yards with a Routine (+10%) Command Test.

Armour: Helmet, Mail Shirt, Shield

Armour Points: Head 2, Arms 0, Body 2, Legs 0 (**Ag:** 36*)

Weapons: Choppa, Dagger

SKETCH MAP OF VORBERG AND THE HORNED MONK

This sketch map is strictly a guide to relative locations and cannot to be used to measure distance. Or, admittedly, for much else.

