WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY

CHILDREN OF THE HORNED RAT

A GUIDE TO SKAVEN

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Introduction

Rats. Disgusting creatures all. In the Old World, the rat symbolizes decay and disease. The creatures lurk in the midden and the privy, in the slaughter yard and the boneyard. They gnaw at the dead and at their rotten flesh, and if not prevented they creep into homes and granaries, breeding in warm beds and devouring fresh food. And unlike the goat getting into the cabbages, a single rat in the granary could do more than just reduce the food stores. The filth it carries with it could poison the whole harvest, leaving the peasants with two unenviable choices: death by starvation or death by some hideous plague.

To control the rats, the Empire employs Rat Catchers, men who scour the sewers and streets with trusty small (but vicious) dogs at their sides. These brave men go even into the distasteful bowels of the cities, doing their part to stem the flood of the pestilential rat. Though he may reek of his hunting grounds and his prey, a Rat Catcher bearing a pole with a dozen fat brownies tied by their tails is a happy sight to all Older Worlders, regardless of class or station.

But the Rat Catchers know more than they let on. Behind the façade of grimy faces and hard eyes, they know that something far worse lurks below the streets. Certainly if you ask them they will deny it, but the truth is there. You can see it in their faces when they hear the scrabbling click of claws on the cobbles, or when they see the tattered silhouette of some bent creature peering out from an alley. They know there are things that look like rats, but larger. Things that walk upright like men.

No mere Beastmen, these creatures are far too cunning, and wildly dangerous. They fight with care, employ terrible weapons of destruction, and are relentless in their despite for the surface races. The wise men and sages, kings and viziers, say that these creatures don't exist. The Rat Catchers know better. Each one knows a peer or three who did not return from their forays into the sewers, whose bodies were never found. They say that these unfortunates were sacrificed, were taken by the Children of the Horned Rat, by the Skaven.

> Omnes: *Rats! Rats! Horrible rats!*
> Watchman: *Rats in the streets!*
> Herr Gusser: *And rats in the houses!*
> Frau Gusser: *Rats in my hair!*
> Jurgen Gusser: *And rats in my trousers!*
> Maid: *Rats in the beds!*
> Governess: *And rats in the cradles!*
> Father Pfeller: *Rats in the soup!*
> Innkeeper: *And rats in the ladles!*
> Omnes: *Rats! Rats! Horrible horrible rats!"*
>
> —from the Opening Chorus from Detlef Sierck's comic opera, "The Rats of Hammstat"

Welcome to Children of the Horned Rat!

This volume examines one of the most dangerous races in the Old World: the Skaven. These Ratmen hatch terrible plots, commit profane atrocities, and breed both their own spawn and pestilence with equal zeal, all to overthrow Humanity's long reign on the surface. While the Skaven have made many attempts to destroy and enslave Humans, they are thrown back each time into their warrens, defeated by the resolve of the good people of the Empire. But the Skaven are not exclusive to the most populous regions of the Old World. No, their Under-Empire extends to every corner of humanity's kingdoms, from as far away as exotic Cathay to the steaming jungles of Lustria. Considering how widespread and powerful they are, it is a wonder the people of all nations aren't cowering in their homes for fear of their impending doom. The reason? The Skaven don't exist.

Or so say the powers that be.

What's Inside

Children of the Horned Rat explores every aspect of the Skaven, from their history to their culture, from the traits of their various breeds to the habits of their most infamous villains.

Within these pages is all the information you need to bring these dreaded foes full-force into your campaigns. Inside you'll find:

Chapter One: The Skaven Are Real, And They Are Among Us!

This chapter explains how the people of the Old World see the Skaven, examining their tendency to shroud legends of the sinister Ratmen in myth and denial. In addition, this chapter offers advice for those who would combat the Skaven menace, including views from established Skaven hunters, tips for equipment, and a list of the tell-tale signs of a Skaven infestation. This chapter also provides a broad overview of the different types of Skaven, as well as examining their physiology and habits, from the perspective of the somewhat baffled residents of the Empire. A few legends of the Ratmen are also explored.

Chapter Two: Skaven History

This chapter examines the history of this insidious race, revealing several diabolical secrets regarding the Skavens' origins.

Chapter III: Skaven Society

This chapter explores the intricacies of Skaven society, providing details on its hierarchy, the nuances of social interaction between its members, and the minutiae and details of the culture, such as it is, that binds these abominations together.

Chapter VI: Settlements

The Skaven world bears a disconcerting resemblance to the surface world. This chapter illustrates the appearance, organisation, and structure of Skaven settlements.

Chapter V: Warfare

This chapter explains the martial motivations of the bellicose Skaven as well as offering insight into typical Skaven tactics. This chapter also includes new spells and rules for Warp Technology.

Chapter VI: Skaven Characters

Designed for groups who want a more vicious game or for Game Masters who want more robust adversaries, this chapter presents new Careers and Talents designed specifically for Skaven.

Chapter VII: A Skaven Campaign

This chapter is invaluable for campaigns that heavily feature Skaven, whether as Player Characters or as opponents. Filled with roleplaying tips and adventure seeds, it pulls together and provides context for all of the information presented previously.

Chapter VIII: Slaves of Destiny

Finally, an adventure pitting the adventurers against the foul Ratmen is provided, as well as guidlelines for playing the scenario from the side of the Skaven as well.

Prisoner of Skavenblight

The last thing he remembered was praying to Sigmar. A terrifying animal face had snarled, he'd heard a blade hit his helm, and his vision had faded a second before his mind did. And he had prayed to Sigmar that he would not die that day.

For a moment, when he came to, he thanked his God for having had heard him. Then his vision cleared, and he felt the weight around his neck and arms, and he knew the Gods were cruel and fickle. He did indeed live, but as a chained prisoner of the Ratmen.

He stared around the cramped stone cell he was lying in, trying to see faces in the darkness. Were any of his fellow soldiers here? A friendly face would be a great comfort. But he saw only old men he did not know, their eyes reflecting his own fear back at him. He thought of his brother, Heinrich, who had disappeared fighting the Ratmen that spring—had he ended up in a place like this? If so, might he still be here?

That hope gave him courage. He began to stand, pushing his body up against the rock walls. Almost immediately, another prisoner crashed into him, grappling him with cold, clammy arms. He looked into the face, hoping for anything familiar, but there was no longer even any humanity there. The eyes lolled, bloodshot and blind, and the withered skin was stuck to the skull like wet paper. The madman tried to talk, but his mouth was filled with sores, and his tongue had long ago been severed with a dull knife.

He pushed away the gnarled prisoner, and raised himself up again. He could see a gate, and a light beyond it, and then all of a sudden, the light was gone. At the top of the darkness that replaced it, the light silhouetted two pointed ears, and whiskers wafting in a slight breeze. The smell stung his eyes, and he fell back. The gate clanged open, and leathery claws grabbed his chains and dragged him out of the cell.

The world spun about him. He felt the pebbles of a rocky path cutting into his back as he was dragged. A cliff face towered above, and beyond it, a cavern of impossible size, filled with light, and noise, the sound of a thousand forges and a thousand shipyards, though how such things could be found in the dark underground, he couldn't understand. The dragging stopped, and he lolled into the fellow prisoners who were being dragged along with him. He saw the old madman again, still trying to form words, bellowing out urgent sounds at him from his broken throat. A warning, perhaps? A terrible cry about what was to come? What torture would they have him endure? What knowledge could they possibly need from him?

Claws grabbed him, and threw his body onto a wooden seat. Spikes hammered his wrist-shackles into the wood, locking him into place. Dimly, he realised it was some kind of slave galley. An iron-bound handle sat in front of him, and the floor moved when he trod on it. Not a galley, he thought, but a treadmill, for crushing grain. They meant to use him as slave labour. Well, he could handle that. He had worked a treadmill as a boy. It would be brutal work, but at night he could plan his escape. He was strong. Almost as strong as his brother. He would find others like him. He would escape. He would survive.

Another bellow came as the madman was pushed in next to him. He recoiled in horror as once again the crazed cripple grabbed at his hands, sliding over them with his death-cold skin. Then he saw it. The old man was putting their hands together, next to each other, so it was obvious that the rings they each wore on their second fingers were identical.

He looked up in sudden realisation. He stared into the eyes of the broken, inhuman creature that his brother had become in only six months. And he went mad.

The Skaven are real, and they are among us!

If you are reading this, then first I thank you, but second I must warn you: herein are contained truths you will not wish to hear, and that others will seek to persecute you for knowing. If you are reading this in any town or city in the Empire, then know without doubt that there are one or more Skaven warriors within a mile of you, and furthermore that they are, at this moment, planning or carrying out acts of theft and murder, spreading sedition, and working to bring about the destruction of our great Empire and the death of every person within it. The Skaven are real, and they are among us, and they are working constantly to murder us all.

If you have found this document, then it means that you are one of the few with the courage to face this truth and the desire to know more about your enemy. It is for you that I have assembled these pages. They are based on 10 years of study and exploration, during which I travelled across all the Old World, seeking truth in all the oldest books and all the darkest corners. I have tried to learn everything of the Skaven that I can, so that you and those like you need no longer be ignorant and afraid. There are, I know, many of you who have seen through the comforting lies and know that the Ratmen are an ever-present and very deadly threat. I hope that with this document those who were ignorant will be made aware, and those who were already aware will become learned and skill hunters of the beasts. Perhaps if enough learn what they are, and of the atrocities of which they are capable, we may one day together drag these vermin out into the harsh light of day.

Yours in Vigilance,
Ammelie Meyer, Priestess of Verena, 2522

Legends of the Ratmen

There are few tales told of the Skaven, for those who have seen them do not wish to be reminded of such horrors, and those who have not seen them have little desire to hear stories of invisible enemies when there are so many more apparent ones in this age of war. What few exist I have collected here, as an example of both the truths and the fictions that surround the Ratmen.

It is said that all myths contain a glimmer of truth. Our first story's purpose, however, is to bury that glimmer, to eliminate the truth and put a great falsehood in its place. It transmutes historical facts and honourable deeds, in particular those of Emperor Mandred Ratslayer, into a child's tale of the Ratslayer driving out vermin. I present it here as a demonstration of the full extent of the lies our children are being taught.

Graf Mandred the Ratslayer and the Incredible Cheese

In the year 1111 after the reign of Sigmar, there came a great calamity. The people of the Old World were even more wicked than they are today. They had turned away from Sigmar and Ulric and the goodly Gods, and the Gods of Evil and Chaos punished them gleefully for this. First there came a great plague of horrible black boils, and thousands upon thousands died in their beds and on the streets. And then came an endless horde of rats, larger than any the world has ever seen, and at their head ran the rat-kings, the Skaven, larger and more cunning and more deadly than all other rats. With these leaders the rats ran unafraid through the land. They fed on the living as well as the dead, killing the young and the old. With each passing day, the rats grew ever more brazen and more vicious. They attacked men and women in the streets, they chased dogs and killed cats and feared no trap or net, nor was there enough poison in the whole of the Empire to kill them.

Soon there was not a town or village in the Empire that was free of them. They filled the streets and rushed along the gutters. They sat on the rooftops and the steeples, they crawled through the middens and climbed into the privies. They ate the food and they poisoned the wine and they scratched the widows and they bit the babies. They ran through the great palaces of Altdorf and the trading houses of Marienberg and the Colleges of Nuln, and they came swarming over the great wall of Talabheim. Soon, most every man and woman in the Empire lay sickening or lay in their graves. And all the while the Skaven kings did laugh to see such slaughter.

Only Middenheim held out against the plague and the rats, safe at the top of Ulricsberg. Graf Mandred wisely ordered the great viaducts of the city smashed before the rats could cross, and men stood at every wall and window with fire and oil to stop them climbing up the rocks. But the rats swarmed around the base of that mountain and the city lay besieged. Months passed, and the food grew short. Graf Mandred knew that though he could protect his people from the plague he could not protect them from hunger. Yet he and his soldiers were too few to turn the tide of rats away from the mountain, and there would be no help coming from the south, for all the other cities had fallen to the endless hunger of the rats.

For 13 days and 13 nights Mandred sat on his throne, trying to think of a solution lest all the men of the Empire perish and Sigmar's great nation fall back into Chaos and darkness. And on the morning of the fourteenth day, he stood up in triumph, for he had a plan.

He called together all the storefolk of the town: the shopkeepers, the butchers, the bakers, the fishmongers, the men who owned the warehouses and stored the grains and the men who owned the restaurants and cooked for the lords. And he summoned all the people of the city also, and he charged them all with a simple task: to bring forward all their meats and cheeses from their larders.

The people cried out at this, for they had so little left, and they feared the Graf meant to starve them then and there. The Graf calmed them, speaking to them of his great plan. Such was his kindness and conviction that the people knew he meant them no harm at all, and such was the wisdom of his plan that all in the city at once fell to their tasks.

Meanwhile, Graf Mandred called upon the engineers to bring forth the largest smelting pot in the armoury. This pot was large enough to boil a man on a horse, and they its purpose was to smelt the cannon-balls for the great trebuchets. He ordered the great pot to be placed in the Square of Martials, right in front of the palace. And all the people of the city were asked to bring their meats and cheeses and throw them into the giant vessel. And so they did, every one, bringing sausages and soup bones and dried steak, and so many cheeses: great wheels of Ulric's Day, and Red Salzemund and Nordland Copper and many more, for the cows had been spared the plague and given much milk that spring, and cheese was plenty. Soon, though the pot was huge, it was full with cheeses and meats, a feast fit for a thousand men, maybe more.

Then the Graf hitched a mighty team of oxen to the pot, and they began to move it. They took it down to the very bottom of that great city, and then farther, down into the tunnels beneath. The Dwarfs guided their way, and great logs were rolled under the pot to help it move. Soon enough, they had the giant pot sitting next to the Great Black Well, that awesome channel that pushes water forth from the deepest depths, miles and miles below Ulricsberg. This great well provided the people of Middenheim with almost all their water, and was the lifeblood of the city. Graf Mandred honoured the Black Well, and asked forgiveness from the Gods, and from the Dwarfs, and from the people of Middenheim, and from the earth itself, for what he was about to do.

First, he gave the order for the great bell of Ulric to be rung out 13 times. This was the signal for all the good folk of Middenheim to hide in their homes and in the watchtowers, to find the highest ground they could. Soon only the soldiers remained on the streets and walls, so as to protect any folk found wandering. Down below Graf Mandred ordered the pot to be raised up on the logs, and a great fire lit beneath it. The bonfire blazed, and soon enough, the great pile of cheese and meat began to melt and warm, then bubble and boil. A great aroma wafted off the pot, the most delicious thing that had ever been smelt or smelled in that city. So strong was this flavour that it was soon born on the wind, rising up out of the undercity, shooting out through the pigeon holes in the rock itself, and down through the tunnels to the ground below, and ever outward, onto the plains.

The rat hordes below were hungry and angry, and had begun eating each other for want of prey. When the smell hit their noses, they went into a frenzy of hunger. Their mouths filled with foam and their eyes with red desire, and they thought of only one thing: to find this food and devour it. In a huge wave the rats charged up the mountain, climbing over each other in their fury, and at their head ran the Skaven lords.

They charged up to the top of the cliff face and swarmed over the walls. Others tunnelled in through the pigeon holes and raced up

the tunnels towards the scent. So great was the odor, so furious was their hunger that they cared for nothing else but to find the source and eat until sated. They did not see that the streets were empty. They did not care that they met no guards. All they cared for was the delicious smell of cheese and flesh in that great boiling pot.

Down and down they raced, jaws frothing, eyes bulging, their hunger raging, their claws ready for death. Down they charged to the great cooking pot, where Graf Mandred and his men still stood. Hundreds of the beasts, thousands of them, filled the city and choked the tunnels beneath. And as they leapt for their food, and for the Graf's men, the Graf gave the word. The Dwarfen engineers lit their fuses, and the gunpowder exploded. The Great Black Well was split asunder, and an endless wave of water burst forth into the tunnels. It gushed like a torrent, spilling down through all the tunnels, filling the under-city to the top and washing into the streets above.

The tide of water blasted the rats against the walls and choked them with its fury. Those who survived its first coming could not swim against the current, their small arms useless against the ever-filling waters. In a few moments, every single rat was drowned. And the last do go under where the Skaven lords, paddling desperately against the flood and screaming for help as the waters covered them. The Graf and his men, whose strong strides had taken them safely to the surface, watched all the Skaven lords die, and watched their bodies sink below, and knew that the horror of the rats had passed. The next day, Mandred raised his troops and marched out to relieve the great city of Altdorf, and from there onward to the whole Empire. When he had finished, the people made Graf Mandred the Emperor, and he ruled long and wisely over the land he had saved.

And every year since, on the 14th of Ulric-Tide, we celebrate the great victory of Emperor Mandred the Ratslayer by boiling up a big pot of cheese and sausage for all to eat, joyous in the knowledge that the rats were driven out and that never more shall they return to plague our great Empire.

—FROM *THE GREAT GRAFS OF MIDDENHEIM, CHILDREN'S READER*

The following tale is told throughout the Empire, with the city in question always changing to suit the audience. I have been unable to trace the origin of the story, but if it was not inspired by real events, there are certainly events much like it happening all over the empire, far more often than we would ever care to imagine.

THE HORRIBLE TALE OF TRESPASS THE RATBOY

There once was a butcher who lived in the city of Middenheim, and he had a son by the name of Trespass. Now, Trespass was a perfectly normal lad, excepting for the fact that he had six toes on his right foot. When the boy was born the father grabbed for his cleaver to lop that extra toe right off, but his mother did wail and hold the boy away from such a thing. So they were merciful, and called not for the Witch Hunters, for who would lose a strong son for nowt but an extra toe?

One summer day, Trespass was playing barefoot with the other children, and they saw his six toes, and they pointed and laughed. They called him names and threw horse-cakes at him and made him cry. But they did far more than that. For the calls of the boys drifted down the streets, and it was heard by passing folk, and they did whisper it to others, who whispered it further and soon enough it came to the ears of a certain wizard. Mad, he was, like all wizards, and in league with the horrible Skaven as well. He and his fellow wizards worshipped those rat-things deep down in the sewers, where they did unspeakable things with them, and called upon the Chaos gods for unholy powers.

This wizard hears about Trespass's six toes, and he sees in Trespass a boy tainted by Chaos and ripe for the picking. So that stormy night he comes to the butcher's house, kills the mother, and snatches the boy away. He takes him down into the sewers, into the darkness, and into his Chaos temple. He ties him down, and calls on the rat-things to come forth. A Skaven comes out of the blackness, and it carries with it a shard of that damned Wyrdstone. It takes the shard, wraps it in rat hair, and binds that to the boy's six-toed foot.

Then they send the boy out on horrible errands for their twisted practices. They strap a cage to his back, bursting with dozens of rats. And they charge him to go around to every butcher's shop, every pie stall, every tavern and meadhall, and put a rat down in the cellars of every one. And the boy, terrified and knowing no better, does what he is told. And the rats get into the meat and the pies and the beer, and everyone gets sick, just like the Skaven want. Disease and plague run riot through the town, and scores of men and women are struck down.

Meanwhile, the boy's father searched desperately for his son. He sold his butcher shop and family home and took to the catacombs. But find him he never did. The brave father walks through the sewers, calling out every minute for his boy, knowing only despair. But Trespass, if he hears his father, does not go to him, for fear of his captors' wrath. Days pass, then weeks. Trespass continues on with his errands, creeping through the sewers with his box of rats, quiet as anything. He finds other rats, whole clutches of them, and he picks them up and puts them in his little cage, or even lets them run around in his coat or hair. And all the while, the stone is working on his foot, turning it from human flesh into rat flesh. Soon enough, where there was a human limb, there is only a horrid rat leg, all hairy and ending in bloody claws. And every step he takes through the sewers, he has one normal footstep—thup—and one horrible scratch along the stone—screech!

And Trespass goes mad at the sight of it, and dearly loves his new leg. And he swears his life and soul to the Skaven forever. Then he creeps back to the boys who had called him names and thrown horse-cakes. He puts rats in their beds and rats in their coats and rats in their shoes, and they are bitten all over, and die of the pox a few

days later, all swollen up with blood and pus. And that's why you must never suffer a Mutant child to live. And why you must always be home before dark, and never go down in the sewers. Because you never know when you'll hear him coming for you, his box of rats rattling in the dark, and that horrible sound of his Chaos-twisted rat-leg: Thup — screeech! Thup — screech! Thup — screeeech!

—Mad Arthur, Vagabond

'The Lazy Sone' or 'The Skaven Crept In'

"Now sone," spake the father
"Will you to work?
Will you go doon in the well
Or will you stay here and shirk?"
"No fear," spake the sone
"In bed I shall lie
For there be rats in the well
And if they bite me, I'll die"
And the father cryed:
"Rats! Rats!
You should give thanks to the Gods that it is only rats!
For fate is a strumpet, and life is a curse
And if it war'n't the rats, it would be something worse!"
"Now sone," spake the father
"Be ye working today?
For the cows are at milking
And a-needing their hay"
"Not I," spake the wastrel
With a piteous wale
"There are rats on the rafters!
And rats in the pail!"
And the father cryed:
"Rats! Rats!
Give thanks to the Gods that it is only rats!
For fate is a strumpet, and life is a curse
And if it war'n't the rats, it would be something worse!"
"My sone," blew the father
"Ye will come to work now!
Get the seeds up and garnered!
Hitch the horse to the plough!"
"None!" cryed the boy
"For down there in the mud
There are rats by the hundreds
And they're hungry for blood!"
And the father cryed:
"Rats! Rats!
Give thanks to the Gods that it is only rats!
For fate is a strumpet, and life is a curse
And if it war'n't the rats, it would be something worse!"
But the boy he was stubborn
And staid in his cot
And his father, a-sighing
Returned to his lot
And there all alone
The boy slept owt the day
Till the Skaven crept in
And stole him away
And the boy cryed:
"Rats! Rats!
Sweet merciful Shallya, let it be rats!
For fate is a strumpet and life is a curse
And I no longer fear rats now I know what is worse!"

—Popular tavern song in Wissenland

Common Views

In my travels and my research, I have heard a thousand facts about the Skaven, almost all of them wrong. I include a sample of them here, in the style of the great Odric of Wurtbad, to give the reader a sense of the scope of beliefs that exist about the insidious Ratmen. If nothing else they show that, where ignorance reigns, the mortal mind creates stunning variety to fill the recess.

"This very day I was accosted by the bailiffs in my own school room, and given an edict signed by Ar-Ulric himself. We are not obliged to say that Skaven exist, but we are ordered to "teach the controversy." As if to say that children's tales and the ravings of the mad are somehow creating disputation in the field! As if there was ever any sign or mark found anywhere to give credence to these fantasies of rats that walk like men! As if their existence was as scientific as the Grand Elemental Proposition! I fear for education today and in the years to come, for it seems we will never move beyond this benighted and fearful age in which we live."

—Master Stefan Ellendan,
Professor of Sciences at
the University of Salzenmund

"There are those so overcome by their depraved lusts they lie with the beasts of the field. Those that lie with goats spawn the horned Beastmen; those that lie with the dogs and cats give birth to the furred Skaven; those that sell their souls to Slaanesh and lie with snakes and toads give birth to Orcs; and, of course, those that lie with sheep give birth to Averlanders."

—Father Scrinster,
Ulrican Friar

"A friend of my uncle's knew a sailor who went all the way across the ocean to the other side of the world, where the men walk upside down and the horses breathe fire, and he said that down there are these newts that walk around just like men. So if you ask me, same thing with these Ratmen and Beastmen: animals just get uppity if you don't watch them, and they start acting like us. That's why we must beat them and stomp on them, to show them who's master, and we should burn any that start to talking or standing on two legs."

—Gerhardt von Heckenberg, Muleskinner

"Oh, 'the Skaven did it,' or 'the Skaven took him,' that's what all the city workers say. Really all they want is to get out of doing their jobs! 'Can't clean your privy today, ma'am, there's Skaven about. Can't get the rats today, ma'am, saw a Skaven in the alleyway.' What utter tosh! Frankly, I think we should arrest any giving voice to this fantasy and flog them in the main square. That will stop their tongues wagging."

—Lady Constance Culvett of Wolfenburg

"Japp and I were on watch on the wall that night, when we saw 'em. A dozen of 'em, coming right out of the river. Bigger 'n men, and all covered in fur and horns and spikes, and with burnin' green eyes and long noses and tails. Like rats! They climbed up the bank, up the wall, and all of 'em went into the east tower, through the Master's window. Sword of Verena, I swear 'tis true as I stand here. An' it was the very same night, exactly one year later, that the Mistress who was supposed to be barren had her baby. I lit out after that, fer I din't dare to work there no more."

—Pieter Stapel,
Militiaman at Castle Dorflingen

"Are they a myth? Well, if you mean the Skaven that lurk under every city and trade with every burgomaster, and the magic rats in

all those tales they use to scare visitors to Nuln, then yes, of course, those are myths. If you mean the rat-headed Beastmen we met on the fields of Ostermark, though, then you're very much mistaken. We call them ratters in my regiment, though, not Skaven. Keeps the men from thinking they're bogey men, reminds them that the ratters are the cowardly ones. The ones who rout as soon as they take a few losses. That gives the men courage, especially if they've been fighting the horned ones, or the four-legged buggers, who won't rout for love or money."

—General Morrsheim, Marshall of the Talabecland Armies

"The enemies of our faith are legion, and the creatures of Chaos uncountable. It is unseemly for us to dwell too much on their nature, for their nature is only Abominable to our sight, and we must surround ourselves only with the good, and the Holy. Therefore we shall have no names for any of them but Chaos-Spawn, and no thought for them except their universal destruction with cleansing fire."

—Arch-Lector Aglim, High Priest of Sigmar, from his *Treatise on the Proper Conduct of the Defenders of the Faith*

"The Ratmen came up behind me and they put me in a box and they took me to the dark place and they fed me soup that was all black and nasty and I said I don't like your soup and then they beat me and said eat it manthing or we cut out your tongue and so I ate it and then I couldn't see proper and then they let me go and I couldn't find my house or my mam and my skin was real itchy and I was bleeding and falling over and then the watch came and said wicked boy you should have a bell to warn folk but I didn't have a bell so they beat me and now I am in another box and I don't like it either but there are no Ratmen and no soup and I have rags all on my face but I feel real sick and I wish I could see proper and go find my mam."

—Prisoner #108, Old Temple Prison, Middenheim

The Scholar's View

"The question isn't 'what are they,' but rather 'who are they working for?' Do you think it is some random accident that they so resemble rats, the perfect creature to infiltrate our cities and our settlements? Do you think it is coincidence that no hard evidence is ever found to prove they exist? No, these rat-beasts were made for a purpose, and in the dark hours, they kill whomever their masters set them upon. And who else would their masters be but the Wizards—for who but they would be able to create such beasts? And didn't they benefit nicely when Lord Kaschen dropped dead of the pox last month, and his Wizard Tax went with him?"

—Langford Beyer, Agitator of Middenheim

There are two great myths about the Skaven. The first is that they do not exist. The second is that anybody truly believes in the first.

It is impossible for the Skaven to have an empire so large and plans so all-invasive yet to leave no signs whatsoever of their passing. There are always witnesses, sightings, stories, tracks, clues and artefacts; things left behind, or forgotten. Despite the secrecy and deceit that protects the Ratmen, even the most ignorant peasant cannot fail to see patterns in the traces, and thence create their own stories to fill the gaps. Thus many scholars and sages have come to believe in the Skaven, or whatever they think is the Skaven—be that giant rats, or rat-headed Beastmen, or Wizards in the form of rats, or anything else. What they do not believe is the true nature of the Skaven, nor the true enormity of the threat they represent to us all.

"Is it likely there exists a separate strain of Beastman with uniform rodent characteristics? Of course. Is it likely that these beasts are anywhere near as intelligent, as numerous or as omnipresent as the tales would have us believe? Of course not. The question is laughable, and a product of nothing more than typical human paranoia, fed to bursting by the propaganda of our jingoistic

governments in order to justify their next military campaign. As in all things, we reap only what we sow."

—Manfred Keyes, Professor of Humanities, University of Altdorf (now disbarred)

"The Skaven are real, oh yes, very much so. And they are not the mindless, evil beasts that we've been told to fear by the Grand Theogonist. You know Marquis Ludovicus, who wore the mouse-ears to the last Masquerade? That was a signal, don't you know. All of us in the group knew what it meant—another one of his fabulous parties afterwards. And one of his "little friends" made an appearance, in disguise, to deliver his wonderful party favours. Best stuff in the city, believe you me. And we danced 'til dawn."

—Sir Percival Schwarzluiker, Master of the Jewellers' Guild (deceased)

Even those who have come to believe in both the existence and threat of these beasts can accomplish little, as they are hampered by their inability to speak out. The Witch Hunters are as vigilant as ever, the Sigmarites quick to censure, and fellow scholars quick to scorn. So they must hide their convictions behind possibilities and hypotheses—words through which the certainty of holy denial cuts like a scythe.

"From what We have read, the evidence remains fragmentary and anecdotal. We would dearly like to know the truth of the matter, but how do We separate truth from myth? Every child knows the tale of Emperor Mandred and the rat-kings, and every house-frau has heard the street-corner gossip about Ratmen lurking in every shadow. So every fragment is viewed through the lens of this myth, and every anecdote fired as much by imagination as by true observation. Whatever these Skaven may be, We cannot know them until We can see them with Our own eyes."

—Duchess Helga Ulrichsen, third in line to the throne of Talabheim

"I see now that I was mistaken. How could great merciful Shallya allow such beasts to exist? How could Sigmar stand their presence, or our great Emperor fail to drive them back to the Chaos Wastes? No, I was a fool, who trusted in the words of other fools. I hereby recant everything in my essay, and condemn it as the greatest heresy. May the masters of this great college forgive me, and may Sigmar have mercy on my soul."

—Colman Smithers, Student at Altdorf University

Ironically, the scholars most aware of the presence of our enemy are rarely those who devote themselves to the Ratmen's extermination. Rather, they trade and parley with them, they make deals and promises, for they have heard too often about the benefits of the so-called "Chaos Bargain." The Skavens' gift for secrecy makes them excellent spies for those who want them, and their love for Warpstone makes them easily bought by any Wizard or alchemist who has some to trade. The one saving grace of this treacherous practice is that the Ratmen always turn on their temporary employer, using him for their own needs before killing him. Thus do these loathsome men perish for their sins, having gained nothing but their own damnation. But who knows how greatly they may help our enemy in even the briefest betrayal?

"You must understand how stupid they are. For ten gold crowns they will procure the most sensitive of documents, or pull off the most difficult of assassinations. And what do they do with his gold? They wear it around their necks, for they like the shine it makes. They are canny enough to get into the most tightly-guarded studies, but they have no culture, no learning, no sense of the value of things. Truly, they are barely above beasts, and if they haven't turned and killed each other between our monthly meetings, they are just as likely to have drowned themselves by scurrying down the wrong sewer. We train our dogs and hawks to do our bidding by passing them a handful of meat, and we never once fear that they will some day seize control of the Empire; I wager that we will more likely see a goshawk on the Imperial Throne than these stupid Ratmen ever learning a mote of strategy! So where is the danger in dealing with them? Indeed, the real danger is in not dealing with them, for who knows how many great men and great cities have fallen due to a lack of intelligence, the kind of intelligence only the Skaven can provide?"

—Sir Jurgen Kuiver, Master Archivist, the Komission of the Imperial Archives, Altdorf

"They are watching me now, I know. They are in the walls, under the stones, in the canals, everywhere. I do not know at which point I ceased to be the master and became the slave, but they have me fast in their chains. I need the powder every day now or my eyes weep and my hands shake. And they have me do things for them, as I once had them do for me—steal things, hide things, play turncoat to my own liege lord. I have thrice-damned my soul and betrayed my friends, my city and my empire to our greatest of enemies. Yet let me say, while I am still of firm mind and unshakeable conviction: that my damnation has not been in vain, and that the eternal torments of the Daemons is a worthy price to pay for the knowledge I have gained and the power I have mastered, thanks to the Wyrdstone they brought, and the proscribed books they acquired. And if I am to die a mewling slave of the Ratmen, then my glorious creation will live on, and through it, my legend will redeem me."

—Doctor Anton Wiessang, Master Necromancer, last diary entry

From Beyond Our Lands

"We call them La Souriscarle, these fever-rats, who brought the Mal Rouge—the Red Death—down upon us. We lost so much to them, the souls of many great knights and the beauty of our great countryside as well. And we know all too well it is you who brought them upon us: you Empire scum and you Tileans, with your filthy cities of moneylenders, thieves and whores!"

—Jacque Bicheau, Bretonnian court scribe

"The hunting of vermin is a task for peasants, not for a knight of Our Lady."

—Sir Phillipe de Blois, Knight of the Grail

The deadly claws of the Skaven have preyed on all the lands of the Empire, and not least upon our Bretonnian neighbours. Seven hundred years after the Great Plague of IIII, the Bretons suffered their own great pestilence of Skaven design, a pox that killed more than half their population. Yet the Bretons remain even more ignorant of their enemies than the people of the Empire, for they have no scholars or learning to match ours, and their knights are a poor substitute for our witch hunters and militiamen. But just as we would scorn the ignorance of the Bretonnians, the Tilean princes scorn us for ours. For the Tileans have thrown off the cloud of ignorance altogether, and face these enemies in the clear light of day.

"Sometimes we call youse the rodonaphobi, which mean the people scared of the mice. Youse Empire peoples are like a woman, no? All on a stool, crying help me, help me, is running up my skirt, when the mice is all small and so quiet. No, no, the Skaven is no mouse, and is very dangerous thing, but youse do not look at it proper, you leap on the chair and close your eyes and say it is not there, if I do not see it. Go, go, little mouse, so I do not see how big you are or know where you are hiding! I see no mouse! I see nothing! And so the mouse live all happy in the walls, and eat all the cheese."

—Cristo Carrazanno, Tilean bawd

The Tileans have the terrible curse of inhabiting the closest land to the great Skaven spawning ground of Skavenblight, which lies in the

Zombie Marshes. Although they have been spared the worst of the plagues, they have instead suffered the greatest share of the sorties of our common enemy. So many times have the Skaven marched against them that they have long-since forgotten the luxury of pretending that the Ratmen do not exist, and instead have devoted themselves fiercely to protecting their cities and exterminating the Skaven found within them. The Rat-Catchers of Miragliano, one of the most famous mercenary regiments in all of Tilea, are employed by the prince of that city solely to destroy the Skaven menace.

"You see these here notch-as on my bandoleer? Thas-sa means I kill twenty Ratmen. Anton, he has the dogs and they-a smell them out, then I sticks them with-a my spear, thas what we-a call sollecitare—it means, the tickler, see? Because of all the barbs on its-a side, see. It kills the Skaveni very much, and then wes-a sticking their stupid little skulls on-a the town gate, as-a warning. Accorde, they always come back again, the very next night too. Theys-a never giving up, and so neither does we."

—Nicolas de Lampedusa,
Tilean mercenary, Rat-Catcher Regiment

From what I have gathered, the southern Estalians have suffered little contact with the Ratmen. The same, I believe, holds true for our Elven neighbours, wherever they may lurk. I have only met a handful of Elves who ventured from their forest homes, and they claimed the Skaven did not and could not enter their hidden cities. Perhaps it is the roots of the magical trees in which they make their homes, reaching down into the earth to block the ever-spreading empire beneath. If the Elves would only share their thoughts on the matter, we might find a great weapon to use against the Ratmen, but as always, the Elves keep their own counsel.

"Of course we fight them, and we slay them, without mercy. They are creatures of Chaos, are they not? But we do not fear them, for they never enter our forests. Such things of the underearth are better left to other things of the underearth. It is a matter for the Dwarfs, who no doubt have much in common with this enemy."

—Ariel Brightmoon, Glade Guardian of Laurelorn Forest

"Our duty is clear. If you cannot stand against them, then we will take a force and destroy these rat-things that prey upon you. Make way."

—Lord Adana, Swordmaster of Hoeth

The Norsemen and the Kislevites tell legends of the Ratmen, and there are many in those nations who are aware of the Skaven menace and who do battle against them. I have also met many Halflings who know of the dangers and do not shirk their duty, despite their small stature. However, there is no stauncher supporter in our efforts against the Skaven than the Dwarfs. They battled the Skaven for thousands of years before the coming of Sigmar, and the Ratmen are below only the Greenskins in their Book of Grudges. We can look to the Dwarfs for aid in our struggle, yes, but more importantly can look to them as a guiding example. Let their courage and tenacity at crushing this menace be an inspiration to us all.

"There's a legend that the Skaven are all descended from Skavor, the son of Gazul, cousin to Grimnir. Skavor, like Gazul, was younger than his brothers and lacked the skill for working stone or shaping metal. He was rightly exiled for this, so he went away into the deep-earth and learnt how to shape his flesh instead of shaping metal, turning himself into a hideous rat-beast and swearing revenge on his blood-kin. And this is why the Dwarfs fight the Skaven as hard as we fight the Greenskins, though the Ratmen have wreaked far less damage upon us: because many of us believe that the Skaven came from our blood. We fight them not just to settle our grudges, but to shed our shame."

—Thurin Strongblade, Runescribe of Karak Alnor

"We've heard tell of these Humans who don't think the Skaven exist. That's Humans for you. But all it really amounts to is fewer

troops to help us hold back these mud-sucking bastards. If you're not picking up a weapon, y' part of the problem, son, and if you get in my way, I'll treat you no different to them rat-faced scum."

—Behram Gundarson, Dwarf Skaven Slayer

Sign and Spoor: Tracking the Skaven

It is well said that in order to best fight your enemy, you must know your enemy. But in this world of ignorance and superstition, and against an enemy which relies so greatly on stealth and subterfuge, it can be difficult to know if you have even encountered the Skaven at all. It is easy to jump at shadows or, contrarily, to miss their actions altogether. If you would wish to learn more of your enemy, you must know them by the trails they leave behind.

"If you want to know for sure that the Skaven aren't Beastmen, then be sure to stand in the middle of a village that's been rat-bitten one day. The Beastmen are deadly, and they've created their share of desolation around the Empire, but the Beastmen are creatures of destruction. That's all. They go through somewhere, and you'll know it. It's worse than the Ogres—they smash everything to pieces, knock down houses, tear people apart, and leave nothing but death and chaos behind. The Skaven aren't like that. When they take a town . . . well, they wait. They plan. They gather their numbers. They come in a swarm, and they come in the dark, and they are upon you before you even know it. I've seen towns left empty with not a single bit of shale shaken from the rooftops, not a spear lifted from the wall. And who they don't kidnap for their mines, they eat, so there's nothing left but a few splotches of blood and that unholy smell to say anything happened at all. It's unnatural, and damn disturbing—a whole town of goodly folk, just vanished without a sign."

—Behram Gundarson, Dwarf Skaven Slayer

Luckily, the Skaven do follow very predictable patterns in their attacks—only their motivations are convoluted and cryptic. As described by my fellow hunter Behram, a "rat-bitten" village will often be left empty, without any survivors nor any signs of violence to explain the disappearance. Likewise, when they fall upon an army or fighting squad, the Ratmen typically leave the battlefield stripped clean, with only armour and shields remaining. So great is the Skaven appetite that I have even seen them stop to devour a fallen foe in the middle of a battle.

When they do leave corpses behind, usually in isolated communities, their reliance on Warpstone weapons and technology is typically evident in the carnage. Flesh turns black and blisters when hit with the terrible fire of a warp-pistol, and whole landscapes may be similarly affected by the payload of the Warpfire Cannon. If there are any survivors, they will almost certainly be mutated after their exposure, as may many other unfortunates living nearby. In such cases, the entire area may need to be burned clean and the Mutants put to the sword as soon as possible. Such is the dark shadow of the Skaven.

Signs of a Skaven Attack

In the cities, however, crimes and violence are typically done with a Skaven-like mandate—to leave as few signs as possible, regardless of the perpetrators. This makes it far more difficult to recognise when or where the Skaven have struck. I have thus prepared the following list of signs to look for when inspecting a case of suspected Skaven activity.

- Difficult Entry: The Skaven are excellent climbers and able to squeeze through the smallest of entrances. If there seems no possible way for a man or even Halfling to have got to the site of the crime, then it is a good chance the attacker was a Skaven.
- Tracks: Are there any tracks nearby, in the dust or dirt? Skaven tracks resemble that of a large hunting dog, only narrower and with longer claws. Look also for claw marks in wooden floors or doors.

- Smell: If the attack was recent or the site not ventilated, a strong powerful musk may remain in the air or on the clothes. Imagine the smell of the water of a dying cat mixed with the aroma of festering wounds: that is the scent of the Skaven.
- Hair: Skaven hair is long, thin and spiny, typically brown, dark grey or black. Hair may be caught by the Skaven brushing against walls or doors, or left in the wounds of the victim, should there be a body left behind.
- Warpdust or Mutation: As constant users of Warpstone, any contact can spread fine amounts of this dread mineral. Always take care when investigating a scene as a result! If the Skaven had been recently exposed, fine green or blue powder may have transferred over to the skin or clothes of the victim. Otherwise, look for signs of recent mutation—a distorted eye or ear, and extra finger, etc.
- Metal, Glass or Gunpowder: Narrow slivers of a very fine metal may be found, or shards of glass like that from a lens. Do not touch these if you find them! They are the remnants of Skaven weapons, and are most likely tainted with their deadly poisons. Collect them with a shovel or piece of wood, and bury them in the sanctified grounds of a Chapel of Ulric or Sigmar. Elements of explosive devices may also be found, such as fuses or traces of gunpowder.
- Green or Yellow Oil: This may be found on the metal or glass items mentioned above, or simply on the floor or other surfaces. It should also not be touched! It will appear slick, like lamp oil, and may smell like it as well. If it is residue or spillage from one of their poison sacks, however, it may have no smell. Anything contaminated by such a substance should be burned and sanctified immediately.
- Poison: Poison darts or throwing stars will leave small wounds in the skin with little blood. Look for discolouration around these wounds, or swelling. Discolouration in the eyes or on the tongue or fingers may also indicate poison. Also consider how the body was found; a drugged victim will not have been able to raise a weapon or even his arms in defence.
- Infection or Plague: Does the body appear diseased in any way? Do the wounds smell infected? Have the wounded areas become swollen or reddened, or do they drip with pus? Discolouration in the eyes or tongue is also a useful sign of disease.
- Savage Wounds: Are the wounds clean as if chopped by a sword, or ragged around the edges as if torn by a hawk or wolf? Does any part of the body appear chewed or eaten? Is there a body part absent, or a large chunk of flesh missing? All of these are signs that the Skaven have preyed upon the poor victim.

"We can conclude that the attacker scaled the outside wall while the guards changed watch, then descended through the dumbwaiter shaft without a sound, before tearing the victim apart with a very sharp weapon. We can thus form a picture of a creature of immense strength, of incredible flexibility, with phenomenal climbing skill, and a savagery so inhuman it defies imagination. I maintain again, sir, the evidence strongly suggests that the attacker was neither man nor beast but some abominable hybrid. What is more, the attack was so well planned that I am convinced that the attacker had intelligence far beyond that of any Beastman."

—Volpone Giesser, Altdorf City Watch
(report to supervisors)

"Once or twice, you'll find a body but that can be worse than finding none. We have a saying amongst Dwarfs that goes 'If my shield should falter, let my body be my shield.' It means we don' like to see wounds on our backs. But when the Skaven take you...six of them will jump on you, pull you down, bite and claw, poke out your eyes, rip out your tongue, chew on your guts as you lie there

dying...and the wounds are everywhere. That ain't no way for a Dwarf to die. No way at all."

—Behram Gundarson, Dwarf Skaven Slayer

It is of course little comfort to detect the presence of Skaven after they have committed their foul murders. I have had many ask me how they might detect the Skaven before they strike. Here are some signs to look for in your town or local area:

- Mysterious or sudden disappearances of residents, officials or city workers.
- Sewers backing up, other public works falling down or failing.
- Sewer jacks or watchmen complaining or leaving their jobs.
- Ironically, a *reduction* in rat numbers—Skaven often eat sewer rats, so reduced numbers may in fact indicate a Skaven presence under the streets.
- Sewer entrances, drains, trapdoors or river gates broken or disturbed.
- Cowled figures moving on the streets after dark.
- A rise in mutations, breech births or other bad omens.
- The moon Morrslieb, which the Skaven worship, being full when any of these events occur.

Any one of these in isolation is unlikely to indicate a Skaven presence under the streets or in the alleyways, but if you observe several of them, you must immediately take action. Do not, I exhort you, try to seek or pursue the Skaven, especially alone! Skaven are cowardly and always prefer to have the advantage of numbers, therefore a single man is always in grave danger. Skaven tend to hunt in packs of four or five, so if you must investigate their lairs, ensure you take at least a dozen strong men, preferably soldiers.

Do not tell the watch or any other authorities of your suspicions or discoveries. Unless they are like my associate Volpone, city officials will either ignore your information or will simply report it to a higher party. Due to the duplicitous nature of the Skaven, it is quite likely someone in the chain of command will be in league with the Ratmen, and then he and they will be aware of your knowledge. The Skaven will be sent for your blood the very next night.

The best course of action if you believe you are in danger of a Skaven attack is to summon a Skaven hunter or a group of travelling adventurers to deal with the problem. Skaven hunters are rare, but nearly guarantee success. If you are dealing with itinerant adventurers, make sure you get experienced ones who have dealt with the Skaven previously. You should also never pay adventurers in advance. Negotiate either a sum per Skaven skull they bring back, or a flat rate for the whole group. Do not offer to pay them a set amount per person, or you will find many teams will come back with more men than they started—squires and seconds whom they simply "forgot to bring along" during the bargaining!

Despite their unscrupulousness (and typical mental instability), adventurers are the easiest solution to a Skaven presence. Should they succeed, they will not raise the attention of the watch or any officials, and will move on to a new town before suspicion or thoughts of revenge can fall upon you. And should they perish at the hands of the Skaven, their lifestyle is such that they will not be missed.

If you cannot locate adventurers quickly, there are some common sense steps you can take to help protect yourself against the Skaven:

- Board up all entrances to sewers, drains and rivers. Even if the Skaven have no interest in you, you may be denying them a thoroughfare, or method of quick escape. Inform your neighbours discreetly of the risk, and encourage them to shut up their houses as well.
- Summon a priest of Sigmar and have your house blessed and sanctified. Carve the symbol of the comet or the hammer on your door and window frames, and sprinkle holy water on the door step. This will deter the Skaven from entering, although it is not foolproof: the Skaven are powerfully resistant to the holy powers.
- Observe the town curfew. Encourage your neighbours to do so as well. That way, anyone seen outside afterwards can be marked as suspicious.
- Build a Skaven-knell. Hang a thin rope high across a nearby sewer or creek, and tie harness bells along it. At three or four equally spaced intervals, loop separate ropes around the first. These should be long enough to dangle in the water. Attach large fishing hooks to the end of the vertical ropes, and paint the entire thing with tar to obscure it. In the dark or while underwater, the Skaven will not see the knell, the hooks will catch in their fur or armour, and pull the bells, thus giving you plenty of time to arm yourself or evacuate.
- Finally, always keep a loaded crossbow in the house. You may not have time to load if the Skaven attack. Having arsenic on hand is also useful, as a swift death from poison is preferable to being taken back to a Warpstone mine in chains.

Hunting the Skaven

"I may be small, but I'm strong. Hell, 10 years in a Skaven mine makes you damn strong. I get in close, I can snap their puny necks like a twig. I could teach you Empire boys a thing or two about it, that's as sure as mutton."

—Fassbinder the Strong, Halfling mercenary

If reading all the above has caused you to give in to terror or despair, reader, then take heart. For there is hope in the face of the Skaven threat: a few individuals who dedicate their lives to holding back this ubiquitous foe with all their strength, till sword or old age strike them down. These are the Skaven Hunters. They are few, but their deeds are great, and their courage legendary.

They are few because the task offers great risk, yet no glory in victory, and no payment in bounty. Who, after all, would pay a man for battling a creature that does not exist? However, as we have seen above, there are many who have come to believe, both rich and poor, and although they cannot declare it publicly, they will sometimes pay handsomely for the removal of these very deadly vermin.

"No lord of the manor wants to admit to his wife or his friends at court that he's paying a bunch of Dwarfs to kill Skaven for him. So you have to be discreet. You say you're ratcatchers, and touch your nose a few times, and if they know what you mean, then, well, they know what you mean. Any good seneschal will make sure you get paid your due as "ratcatchers" with no one the wiser—although make sure to get your money in advance! More than once I've had a lord offer me a fine bounty then refuse to pay me for killing some figment of my imagination. May the Skaven chew their bones, I say."

—Behram Gundarson, Dwarf Skaven Slayer

Of course, the poor folk of the cities or farms can offer little in bounty, but they can frequently pay in services and supplies. A Skaven hunter needs food and lodgings; his horse may need shoes; his weapons may be in need of sharpening. Again, however, discretion is vital, for peasants and nobles alike may call the witch hunters if your profession is revealed. We cannot help but stand amazed at the courage of these men, for not even the crazed Dwarf Daemon Slayers risk execution by the very people they protect!

"We do not do it for coin, for there is none. We do not do it for glory, for there is none also. We do not do it for even the gratitude of the people, nor the soft kiss of a maiden, for the people are too scared to thank us. No, we do it for the screaming of our enemies—and of that, mi amico, there is a-plenty."

—El Gatto del San Stefenato, Tilean Skaven Hunter

The Complete Skaven Hunter

Some items no Skaven Hunter should be without:

- Halberd or Spear. Skaven are fast and prefer to overrun their opponents in great numbers. The length and speed of these long weapons keeps them at bay.
- Crossbow Pistol. It lacks the range and penetrationof a crossbow, but you won't need much distance, and Skaven rarely wear armour. Most importantly, you can wield it in your free hand, so it is always ready should a Skaven get past your sword.
- Pistol or Repeater Pistol. If you can afford them, these weapons have a similar advantage to the crossbow pistol—they are fast and deadly, knocking back attackers who get too close. Both the pistol and the crossbow are also useful for taking down a fleeing Skaven before he can summon more of his fellows.
- Chain or Plate Armour. Skaven teeth can tear through leather like paper. Metal armours are expensive, but what price can you place on your life?
- Cloak or Overcoat. Much of your hunting will involve creeping through sewers or muddy tunnels, and it is wise to have something to protect your clothes. Good boots are also a must.
- Neckerchief. Soaked in wine, garlic oil or healing herbs, and placed over the nose and mouth, this will allow you to breathe cleanly despite the smell of the sewers and the even worse smell of the Skaven. Dwarf warriors prefer to soak theirs in their own urine, swearing by its effectiveness.
- Hooded Lantern. It may be important to gain surprise on the Skaven, so a light that can be shaded is useful.
- Clay. Skaven hunt by scent, and can smell a Human from at least 100 yards away. To defeat this, rub your armour and skin thoroughly with thick, fresh clay. Dwarf warriors prefer more pungent camouflages, such as pig's blood or even Skaven dung.
- Crowbar. Sewers are often blocked by grills or locked gates. A crowbar can come in handy for these moments.
- *Symbol of Sigmar*. As mentioned, the Skaven have little fear for the Hammer, but we should never face our enemies without keeping our Lord Sigmar close to hand and close in mind.

If despite all this you seek to join the ranks of these brave adventurers, then I can offer little more than my admiration and my prayers, for although I have slain my share of Ratmen, I am far more a woman of books than of battle. I instead turn to some of my long-time comrades for their words on the matter:

"The Skaven are smarter than they look. Don't mistake them for being stupid—nor for cowards, neither. The reason they run is because the surface isn't their home ground. They only fight when they've got the advantage: underground, in the dark, and with far superior numbers. In fact, if the Skaven attack, you know you're in trouble, because it means they think you don't stand a chance. It's much better to track them down and attack them by surprise. And they ain't too hard to track. Once they get underground, they don't expect anyone to follow them, least not in the cities. They smell like a plague pit too, so just follow your nose."

—Behram Gundarson, Dwarf Skaven Slayer

"A single Skaven, he is a weakling and a coward. Divide and conquer is the watchword here. In ones and twos, they will always fall under your sword, but in many numbers they will come from all sides, sneak around behind in the dark tunnels, even dropping from above, or crawling from below, and attacking without fear or any caring for their own lives. They are like the ocean tide—but like the tide, if you stand firm, then they will break against you. Keep your distance, strike and then fall back, and try to target the larger ones, most special the ones with black or grey fur rather than brown. These are the Skaven generals, and without them, the others will break much quicker. It is not so hard to defeat them, if you keep your heads against such numbers and such furies. Truly, down in the dark, it is fear that is your enemy, not the Skaven."

—El Gatto del San Stefenato, Tilean Skaven Hunter

As I write these last words, I am reminded of my comrades Behram, and Volpone and Fassbinder, and I recall again the most important lesson I have learnt in all my study of Ratmen and of hunting them. And that is to never hunt them alone. In greater numbers we can use their favoured weapons against them, driving them out by force.

And note well, brave reader, that we need never hunt them alone. In this world of fear and ignorance it is easy to feel so very isolated, as if all the world is blind to the reality and the danger of the Ratmen. But there are more of us than you might believe, and with each passing day, there are more still. The more we learn and the more we fight, the more we can remove the Skavens' claws from around the throat of our great Empire. One day, there will be an army of us, brave souls who can no longer pretend to believe the lies. Then we will rise up, drive out the Ratmen from their holes, and rid this world of the Skaven menace forever.

It is a victory for which I pray every single day.

—Ammelie Meyer, Priestess of Verena

Form and Function

The following notes include all I have discovered on the nature, form and behaviour of the Skaven in my 10 years of study. Those of you who wish to defeat the Skaven should read it well, and often, though you may find much of it distasteful, unbelievable or even heretical. All the information I have collected here will make you better prepared to fight our enemy. It may also save your life.

Some of what follows was gained through personal experience and observations, the rest from discussions with witnesses, or from writings I have collected. The last source provides the first inclusion—a lengthy letter describing an intense physical examination of Skaven corpses. Alas, the receiver is long dead, and I could find no trace of the sender or his amazing find.

A Most Disturbing Find

To: Dr. Heironymous Blitzen, Professor of Bestiaria, University of Altdorf

Doctor Blitzen,

I thank you for again taking the time to read a missive from such a primitive as I, by which I mean both my residence in the rustic location of Rugebrunnen and my poor and humble scholarship in comparison to yours. I hope you forgive my intrusion upon your studies, but I feel I must bring to your attention a most shocking and disturbing find. It may in fact be the most important finding of this century, both to our common field of Bestiaria, and also for the security of the Empire! For I have uncovered the first undeniable proof of something that previously all learned men would have called a myth. I have discovered bodies of the Skaven.

You yourself have written that even in the wildest stories of monsters there is a glimmer of natural truth, but in the case of the Skaven, that glimmer in fact seems to be a blazing bonfire, and the light of it may illuminate a whole nation that heretofore was in the darkness.

But I shall start at the beginning.

I had, as you so readily instruct us, put forth word to all those in the village that should they discover any beasts unnatural or strange to alert me immediately. This most recent report came from the men of a tunnel crew, helping to expand the cellars of the town hall. All men were good, honest, Sigmar-fearing men, neither drunkards not zealots, and not given to fancies nor forgeries. I can swear that their testimonies are accurate.

They had apparently broken through into an underground cavern, where they detected the air to be sulphurous and choking. When the air had been cleared, they discovered that others had already fallen victim to the deadly vapours. For on the other side of the cavern, having dug in from farther below, were five creatures which could only be described as Skaven: large, humanoid rats. I went and inspected the bodies myself, and ordered them immediately to be carried to my workshop.

I made sketches of each of the creatures (which I have taken the liberty of including with this letter) and then began to examine them internally, following to the letter the processes outlined so well in Anatomica Principia, by your colleague Sir Josef Liener. What follows below are my complete and unexpurgated notes made during this exploration, and further sketches made during the operation.

Visual Appraisal

If we are to believe our own eyes, the creatures would fit every child's story and peasant myth of that race we call the Skaven. The creatures are gigantic rats. All but one are beyond five feet in length, and their bodies twisted so as to walk upright, or near enough, so they would stand as tall as a man. All five specimens seem hunched, but whether this is a birth trait or due to the cramped nature of their underground lifestyle, I cannot say. In all other respects they resemble the common rat: they are covered in fur from head to feet, apart from the hairless nose, ears and a thin fleshy tail. The tail is about as long as the body, and is used for balance while moving. Each of the four limbs ends in a viciously clawed paw. The ears are prominent, and they possess long whiskers under the nose. In all respects, these features are disturbingly similar to those of the rats from which they undoubtedly originated.

At least, that holds true for three of the five specimens found. Of the others, one is very much rat-like, but has the notable aberration of two extremely large, curving horns, like that of a goat or ram, protruding from the top of its skull. The final beast is something unlike any rat and rather akin to a creature of nightmare. I have heard tell of the legendary Rat-Ogres, the terrifying giants of the Skaven race, and given the immense size of this beast, I can only presume that this is what I have found.

Even the other four, though uniform in their basic appearances, showed great divergence in other factors. The smallest of the four (Creature I in my sketches) would have stood only four feet ten inches tall and was clearly a far weaker physical specimen than the others. It also had brown fur, whereas the large, muscular Skaven (Creatures II and III) have a deep black fur, and the horned one (Creature IV) a very light grey. Judging by the general health of all four creatures, I have postulated that fur colour is used as a basis of social hierarchy in the Skaven burrow: white furred at the top, then black furred, then brown. The smallest creature is also marked by many scars from what I believe are whips, and had other signs of beatings; I surmise therefore that he is either a prisoner, or of a servant or slave caste. Despite the beatings, and indeed the infectious lesions on his skin, he seemed in good health, indicating these creatures have a hardy constitution!

The black fur may perhaps denote a warrior class, as Creatures II and III are not just larger and more muscular (each over six feet tall at the shoulder!) but have longer claws and fangs, stronger forearms and more powerful jaws. They were also found wearing heavy armour and carrying the largest weapons, and their tails are pierced with iron spikes, presumably for attacking enemies. We can suppose that this group was some sort of advance scouting party: a leader with his two bodyguards, his servant and the monstrous killing machine he controls.

Turning aside now from their individual differences, I will focus instead on what characteristics all five creatures share, for here, I believe, we can form a picture of the nature of the Skaven form, and thus, perhaps lead us to hypothesize on the mind of this terrible enemy.

Fur and Skin

On all the creatures, the fur is quite fine, and thick, again much like a rat. It is clearly well-insulated from the cold, and is covered with a

fine oil that makes it virtually water-proof. We can assume that, like the water-rat and otter, the Skaven are good and frequent swimmers. This oil is secreted from various orifices in the skin, located along the back and neck, under the arm-pits, on the hip joints and above the tail, and is presumably spread with their claws. I examined these orifices and they seem extremely complex, and somewhat like the stink-vessel of the common skunk. I hypothesize the Skaven can produce liquids from these glands with a variety of aromas, and that this forms a type of communication for them, with each subtle change in scent containing as much meaning as we might include in an entire sentence. I also found patches of urine and faeces among the fur, which may be used to further enhance their foul stink, just as dogs like to roll in horse manure.

The skin is quite thick beneath the fur, and there is a layer of fat immediately below, which again would protect against the cold and wet. The hide is not particularly tough, but it is clearly durable. Every creature's skin was marked with countless scars and abrasions, both old and new, and most of them matching the claw size of another Skaven, indicating even when not engaged against their enemies, the life of a Skaven is one of constant battle with his own kind.

The skin of all the creatures also showed signs of various infections and diseases. In some cases, these had since passed, leaving pox-marks and abraded skin; in others there were fresh pustules, boils and rashes. Due to the risk of infection, these areas were not studied. Instead the flesh was cut off and burned immediately. One can imagine that touching a Skaven is as dangerous as touching a pox-ridden beggar in the streets.

There was one final noteworthy aspect of the skin: every creature also bore a least one area of ritual scarring or tattooing, typically in the form of a sigil: three lines intersecting to form a triangle. I can only guess that this is of some kind of occult significance, although it is a terrifying thought that beasts such as these would have gods akin to those of men!

Skeleton and Muscles

As mentioned, the skeleton frame is set so as to allow the creature to walk upright, yet hunched. The back legs are extremely strong, and the tail allows the upper body to extend forward without unbalancing. This puts the creature's nose, eyes and ears at the forefront, the faster to detect danger or enemies. The pose also puts them ever-ready to pounce forward, tearing their enemies open with their terrible fangs and claws. Pity the poor Empire soldier who is used to seeing his enemy's shield first, who turns a corner and instead stares straight into the eyes of these monstrous killers, already leaping for the kill!

Their upper body is also quite strong: like the rat, they are created to latch all four limbs and teeth into their prey and never let go. However, if they were unable to bring this strength to bear, then they would likely be quite helpless: it seems to me that, much like the wings of a falcon, the muscles are only strong in certain movements and positions. In the main, the Skaven are far weaker than we Humans, particularly when it comes to carrying or pulling loads. This likely explains why only the larger of the creatures were wearing any armour, and the poor quality of their thin blades.

The Skaven make up for their lack of strength however with their speed. Not only are they poised to pounce and bring down their enemies under their weight, their powerful back legs make them extremely quick. I estimate they could run at easily twice the speed of a man. With their sharp claws and gripping feet, they could reach these speeds on narrow ledges, branches or precipices as well. Their skeletons are also extremely flexible, like that of a cat, able to twist and turn far beyond a man's. This combined with their powerful legs and strong claws makes them extremely nimble and no doubt excellent climbers. I fear they could escape most any bond or cell, and could reach the most remote of castle towers or mountain outposts. Again, pity the Empire soldier who thinks he is safe in his high guard tower!

Natural Weapons

If by their works may we know our Gods, then whatever unholy gods the Skaven have, they are far hungrier for death than Ulric and Sigmar. The Skaven are not only built to pounce, but they abound with terrifying weapons to tear us to pieces when they do.

Each paw has four strong appendages, ending in an inch-long razor sharp claw. The claws are also able to be covered in oil secreted from beneath the skin, which no doubt poisons or infects the wounds they cause, further speeding the demise of their prey. The foot claws are equally sharp and envenomed, but neither set are as fearsome as the fangs.

The Skaven possess somewhere between 20 and 32 teeth, including four large incisors at the forefront. The top ones protrude from the mouth, descending below the chin to form extremely sharp points. Removing one, we tested its efficacy on rope and leather and it proved as good as any blade I own. As mentioned, the jaws are very powerful, and the teeth are designed to puncture, rather than saw, again so that they can apply their weight to the enemy and, if not drag their whole body down, perhaps rip off entire limbs instead.

Still the arsenal continues, for the Skaven can also use their tails as potent weapons. As mentioned, Creatures III and IV had metal spikes inserted in the ends of their tails, no doubt so they might whip them around in combat to strike their enemies with unexpected blows. I experimented with the flexibility of the tail, and I believe that Skaven might also be able to hold clubs or blades in those coils, or perhaps other helpful tools such as lanterns, poison vials or incendiaries.

Regarding weapons and tools, it seems their fingers are nimble enough to not only manipulate black powder weapons (Creatures III and IV were armed with them) but to build them as well. I am far from a scholar of the armoury, but I believe that the devices we found on these creatures are nothing any human mind would create, or even conceive! Not only

do they seem dangerously unsafe, but they contain fragments of what I believe to be that foul substance Warpstone. I have placed these weapons in a metal strongbox, just in case, and will await your advice before examining them further.

Internal Organs

I have removed several of these but I must confess again my complete lack of scholarship in the art of surgery. I have placed the items in jars full of fermented ale, as instructed by Sir Liener, but can tell little from them myself. I can however see a stomach and lower tract, as with most creatures.

I cut open the stomach in an attempt to analyse diet, but the only noteworthy discovery was two gold rings, as would be worn by a nobleman or wealthy merchant. This to me suggests that perhaps the hands or fingers had been devoured whole, and the Skaven stomach is powerful enough to digest even bones, given sufficient time. I also found more flakes of Warpstone in the stomach of the white-furred creature. I refuse to believe that any beast, no matter how tainted by madness or Chaos, would wilfully ingest this substance, so I instead conclude that they were swallowed by accident, while the creature was performing some dark sorcery or twisted experiment.

I also noted that the stomach seemed very small compared to that of a man or even a wolf. Perhaps this is the origin of the Skavens' reputation for ravenous hunger, as they have to continually eat to keep refilling this tiny stomach?

I conducted a brief examination of the ears and nose (areas where I am much more confident of my studies!) and found them much like those of a rat or indeed a dog. The sketches I made of a hunting hound last year proved an excellent point of comparison: the Skaven's senses seemed to be of a very similar design. Both sets of ears contained small hairs to amplify the sound, and both animals' noses had the same large internal surface area, where the flesh is pocked with thousands of "scent-holes." Based on this comparison, I would have little doubt that the Skaven's sense of hearing and smell is at least the equal of any good hunting hound. This means they could likely detect their prey up to a mile away in good wind.

The Beast

I turned to this ungodly creature (Creature V in the illustrations) last of all, because, if I may be honest, I was afraid to learn more about it. I could not conceive of the power that could create such a beast, or the mind that would choose to. To look upon it is to behold the work of true Chaos.

I am not being fanciful in my words here, for the more I examined the beast the more I became convinced that it was a work of design, created by the Skaven the way you or I would create a sculpture of clay. Only here the clay was the flesh of their own race, and probably others and they must have moulded it with the blackest of magic. Not to mention brute force, for this creature is held together by stitching and, in other places, armoured plates and metal staples. The skin was also scarred heavily all over, more so than all the others. I can not guess whether this is because of the violence it faced from the enemies of the Skaven, or the violence that was done to it by the Skaven in order to construct it or make it obedient.

The cuts are not deep however, and no wonder: the skin is as hard as leather and four inches thick to the muscle. And what muscle! I have once had the privilege to examine the hind legs of a Shire Horse that had been gravely injured in a fall, and I see echoes of the same here: the muscle fibres are thick like ship's rope and wrapped over and over across the chest and arms. Like an Ogre, this creature is approximately 10 feet tall at the shoulder, and yet I believe it may be even stronger than those monsters. I shudder to think of what unnatural surgery was required to put the strength of two creatures into but one.

The creature has all the other features of the Skaven: the flexible spine hunched over and ready to pounce, the powerful legs, the heightened senses, the thick fur. And of course, the same natural weapons—the long, envenomed claws, the powerful puncturing teeth, the spiked tail—only now these are all much larger: four inches long in the case of the claws on the hands. Or I should say hand, for the left hand of this beast had been removed and replaced with a long metal blade, like a spear-point, attached to the flesh with steel rivets driven fully into the bone.

After my brief examination of this creature, I was tempted to burn the corpse, and all the others, out of sheer abhorrence at their unnatural state. I began to understand why other learned men would wish to hide the truth of the existence of these things from the common people, or indeed, anyone. Especially a learned man, for he who has the most knowledge of the natural forms of body and beasts knows most well how horrifically misshapen are theses creations of the Skaven.

And well he knows too, how terribly perfect are the Ratmen themselves; these masters of biology, the perfect, silent hunter in the darkness, the ultimate combination of man and beast. Be they crafted by Chaos God or unmerciful nature, they point to a great hostility in this world in which we live, upon which few men would be brave enough to contemplate.

The Controversy

I have read that there are those who (while admitting their existence) believe the Skaven are nothing more than Beastmen, or large rats bearing some Chaos mutation. After my many days of analysing these creatures, I can of course attest they are far more than rats. But as to their precise taxonomy? It is difficult to say. After all, Beastmen and Skaven are both creatures of horror, and it is difficult to look close enough at such abominations as to be able to classify them.

Yet, from what I have read in the great books you and others have been so gracious to send me, I have concluded that the only defining constant of Beastmen is that they are never constant. They are creatures of pure

It is you, though, Doctor Blitzen, who must help me make my work known. We must convince all the men of learning of this truth, though they will be greatly resistant to accept it. But as long as we call the Skaven a myth, they can prey on us, unknown, unobserved and unchallenged—and who knows to what dark purpose they grow closer to achieving, with every passing day? Such dark thoughts cause my hands to shake in great trepidation, so I shall close this missive now.

Yours on this 20th day of Vorhexen, the Year of Our Lord Sigmar's Empire, 2510

Your ever-vigilant student,

Doctor Felix Liebkosen, Esquire.
The Manor House,
Rugebrunnenm, Middenland.

Comments and Considerations

I found this letter buried in the University Archives, where they have sat since Blitzen's death in 2512. I have since journeyed to Rugebrunnen, but nobody there will talk of anyone named Liebkosen. Indeed, the town no longer has a church, or any sort of scholar's house, after it was razed during the Storm of Chaos. Whatever evidence Doctor Liebkosen had, it has long vanished, and without it, his great work can easily be dismissed as the ramblings of a madman.

No doubt Liebkosen died during the Storm, and Blitzen's sudden death from fever can be explained by the cold winter of 2512. Yet I recall the strange death of Anders Emmerich, who, in 2307, was mysteriously stabbed to death on the streets outside his house, just weeks before he intended to publish his collection of Skaven sketches and etchings. And I recall the great Wilhelm Leiber, whose epic work *The Loathsome Ratmen and All Their Kin* would have opened the world's eyes had it not been condemned as heresy by the church of Altdorf in 2333. Leiber went mad a few months after his book was publicly burned, claiming the Skaven were following him everywhere. He was moved to an asylum but took his own life within a week of his arrival—or at least that is what the asylum report informs us.

I am a woman of logic and reason, and dislike jumping at shadows but I cannot deny that a pattern emerges from this. Are the Skaven or their human agents truly so desperate to stem the knowledge of their nature that they would take such terrible steps upon the few scholars who brave the condemnation of our peers and rulers to throw light upon the subject? Is my life in danger too, then? Mark well, dear reader, that as of this day, the fourth after Hexensnacht, 2522, I am sound and fit of mind and body, and if I should fall to some harm, let it not be blamed on madness or any accident! And if the worst should occur, then whatever you do, reader, copy this work and pass it on in my name! Knowledge will live as long as there are those who live to keep it.

random chance, a hideous mix of animal and human features, assembled with no care for the ways of nature or even basic survival. They have no logic or pattern to their creation, as often undone by their own mutations as helped by them.

But in the Skaven, the patterns are obvious. Apart from the created ogre-beast, all of them are clearly of the same race, and the forms of nature are clearly inherent in their design, so well are they suited to their underground life. They show no random creation or detrimental deformities—they are healthy and hardy and strong enough and smart enough to bring down prey far larger than themselves, even without manufactured weapons.

In summary, I feel Beastmen are the work of Chaos in an overt sense: creatures that, through exposure to Warpstone, have produced a host of random characteristics, of both beast and man. Whereas the Skaven are the work of Chaos in a far subtler way, using the ways of nature to create a perfect monster, a creature that is not random but designed. In the Skaven I see not a mix of man and beast, but all the great advantages of the animals—the strength, the speed, the fur, the claws and teeth, the instinct to kill—given the mind of a man, the ability to think and plan, to create and design, to use weapons and armour just like our own, and to mimic our ways and turn them against us. They are thus the beast best suited to slip into our cities, to undermine our defences and gnaw away at our Empire of purity and order. Though rats be harbingers of disease, I see in these creatures I have studied not the hand of the Great Pestilence, but rather the Great Mutator. Woe betide us if we do not watch for them at every turn and in every corner, for the Mutator is the most subtle and most dangerous of all our unholy enemies.

Which brings me to my final question: as we now, here, have undeniable proof that the Skaven exist, what can we say about the other myths of the Skaven? Do they indeed take our children in the night to work in their slave pits? Do they truly lurk in the sewers of the great cities of Middenheim and Nuln? Did they really bring about the plague of IIII, as is told in some tales? If the Skaven are real, then all of this is possible—even likely. If the Skaven are real, then anything is possible. And the Skaven are real. I have seen them with my own eyes, and though the truth of their existence now gives me such disturbing thoughts, I cannot shut my eyes and return to ignorance again.

Field Notes

I am no scholar of the sciences like Leiber or Liebkosen, but I have made my own study of the Skaven over all my years of tracking them. I am neither proud nor foolish enough to pretend to have created a definitive guide, and fully admit the incompleteness of my observations. However, what follows is likely still the most comprehensive examination of the

subject in existence. I hope one day it will be far eclipsed by works of those with real scholarship in the natural world.

In compiling these notes into one document, I was much indebted to my fellow hunter Behram Gundarson, who offered much advice, and has added his own comments to mine where he deemed it appropriate.

Smell

"The first thing you notice about them is the smell. Not a stinking reek like Goblins, but a smell on the air, like a horse smells when it's scared. It changes, too—when they charge, there's a smokey smell of sweat, and rage; when they run, it's an acidic musk of terror, like an entire regiment has pissed itself. I reckon they use their smell like we use our battle cries, or our tattoos, since I've seen the filthy bastards rub the smell all over their fur before a battle. Since this smell-oil comes out of their ears, and arse, and pizzle, it's no wonder these things are so damn disease-ridden."

—Behram

A good Skaven hunter should have a nose as sharp as his eyes. Even a Human nose will detect these beasts before its bearer's eyes see them, and this is true even when they haven't been wading through the sewers. For the Skaven, scent is a measure of status and a means of communication, and all of them cultivate it carefully. Their emotions control their scent, flaring up to the strongest stink during the extremes of combat. And so too do the Skaven use their scent to communicate those emotions to the rest of the pack. This is likely why Skaven rout so quickly when the battle goes ill—the palpable smell of fear spreads as fast as the wind amongst them.

I believe their control over scent may even be so sophisticated as to express not just broad emotions, but also something of the quality of them, or cause behind them. For example, the scent exuded while fleeing from a troll slayer may be different from the scent given off while fleeing from a group of their own kind. Thus complex information can pass very quickly amongst their lines even in the confusion of battle—far faster than in any human unit.

"And another thing—make sure to get your axe out of them damn quick, and give it a wash and an oil immediately after the battle. Their blood sticks like hell and stinks something awful. You can always tell a Dwarf who hasn't done this: the foul smell takes weeks to fade, and the other Dwarfs mock you until it does."

—Behram

Appearance

"They look a lot bigger than you when you're up close and they've got their claws out, especially the big fat ones. But so do Elves and Humans. I tell you, Skaven go down a lot easier. All that fur is a ruse—underneath they're as lean as a Goblin, and just as easily smashed with a good axe-blow."

—Behram

Perhaps because they are so likened to rats, there seems to be a misconception that the Ratmen are small, like Goblins. In truth, they are very much man-sized, their claws and fangs within easy reach of the human throat. The dark-furred Skaven are sometimes even larger than Humans and broader across the shoulders.

In general, their size and shape is close enough a man that if wearing a hood and cowl they could pass as a beggar or mendicant in a darkened street. Remember, until you have seen a mortal face, there is always the possibility a stranger in the shadows is in fact one of them, watching and plotting.

The way to distinguish a Skaven so disguised is by their gait. Skaven scurry rather than walk: crouched low, their heads and arms forward, their legs coiled ready to spring, their feet up on their claws, and their tails held high for balance. They also move extremely rapidly, with quick, shuffling steps, much like their rat-kin. Skaven who are forced to be visible in public will therefore move as little as possible, until they must, lest they give away their nature. When they are sure no one is watching, they sprint for the nearest underground entry before anyone can notice they are gone.

It is one of the terrifying contradictions of the Skaven that they should be so fast, yet able to remain perfectly still for so long. But they can, and many a soldier has been surprised to find, at the very end of his watch, that a Skaven has been crouching not six feet from him the entire time, waiting for the moment that soldier relaxes his guard. The quiet patience of the Skaven hunter is equal and opposite to his explosive ferocity when he strikes.

Their violence and speed, and their nightmarish appearance, means that most of the Skavens' foes are dead before they even have time to draw their swords. Those entering Skaven territory must have their weapons in hand and their nerves steeled, constantly watching for attack. Eternal vigilance is our only defence.

Tooth and Claw

Speaking of attacks, both the fangs and the claws are extremely sharp and extremely filthy. Any wound inflicted by the Skaven will almost certainly become infected. As soon as possible, such wounds should be flushed out with alcohol, and then wrapped in a healing poultice. In extreme cases the wound may need to be burned clean. Skaven hunters are well advised to wear good armour and travelling clothes that cover the whole body—ankle-length, long-sleeved coats, for example. Not that the Skaven claws will be turned aside by leather, but loose cloth may tangle them somewhat and stop them an inch or so before your skin.

The Skaven are willing to eat anything, and their sharp teeth and crushing jaws make them able to do so. I have seen them bite through steel armour given enough time, which means that only the strongest prisons can hope to hold them. Imprisonment should never be a consideration, of course—the only proper response to a single Skaven is extermination, and the only response to their race is genocide.

Finally, remember that a Skaven has four sets of claws, one set of teeth *and a tail*. A wide shield may protect you from the claws and fangs, but then you'll be struck in the head from behind by an attack you never even saw coming. I speak from personal (and painful) experience.

"When a Skaven gets his claws or teeth into you, he'll never let go. I've seen Dwarfs come back from battle with severed Skaven heads still attached to their legs, the teeth buried in their bones. Their aim is simple—grab on tight and use their weight to drag you down onto your back so you can't fight. We Dwarfs don't fall over so easy, but you manlings are in a lot of trouble, especially if more than one leaps at you. Always stand with a friend beside you, so each of you can prise off any that gets through to the other before you fall. Once you're down, the rest will rush and join the pile-on, and then you're good as dead."

—Behram

Weapons and Armour

Despite their powerful natural weapons, Skaven use manufactured weapons just as often as we Humans do, and they are just as deadly with them. Skaven have little care for craftsmanship, however, so their swords and axes are usually low in quality. They usually favour melee weapons, but special units in their army hordes are trained to use projectiles.

The most popular choice of these appears to be throwing knives or stars. These are more finely crafted than their swords, strong and well-balanced. Typically, they are also coated in deadly poison, just like the blades of the assassins of Araby. Again, the best defence against these is simply a lot of armour, for if these weapons draw blood, there is no hope: the victim will be dead by morning.

I have never heard of a Skaven using a bow. For longer distances, they far prefer gunpowder weapons—or rather, their own versions thereof, powered by gunpowder and some mixture made from Warpstone. Frequently, these weapons also fire bullets made from that deadly stone as well. These unholy stones can dissolve the strongest armour, and are so rife with black magic that again, any victim will be dead within hours, or worse, hideously mutated. There are tales of them hitting from extreme distances, suggesting they have long rifles or jezzails. It is vital, therefore, to never engage the Skaven at a long distance, unless you have a very large force. There are a few cases where Skaven employ crossbows. These are nearly always small repeaters—fast and nasty.

"Ammelie's right about long distance: you never want the Skaven to be controlling the field that much. The best solution is to rush up to them, quick as you can. Very often, a charge like that will break them early, or get you through the ranks to the generals or wizards, and if you take them down, the rest will fall soon enough. Problem is, the Skaven up on the hills don't give a damn about their own men, and they'll fire their jezzails and cannons into the thick of a fray if they think they might hit you. Closing on them doesn't stop the warpfire from coming; it just gives you more cover."

—Behram

Even more terrifying than Warpstone bullets are the weapons that throw warpfire—a kind of burning, flaming ooze that sticks to the skin, with all the same properties of the stone from which it is made. Like the Warpstone bullets of their rifles and pistols, this ooze melts the skin and mutates flesh, leaving its victims deformed or crippled in moments. I have heard legends of huge cannon which shoot the same stuff only in massive volumes, enough to drench an entire squadron with this lethal chemical. I do not know if this is true. I pray it is still a myth.

"It isn't. My cousin Kroger may drink a bit too much ale, but he's no liar, dammit."

—Behram

Whatever the truth of the cannon, it is clear that Skaven weapon technology is far, far beyond that of the Empire, and even beyond that of the Dwarfs. The sole mercy of this is they still lack much attention to craftsmanship, and these terrifying weapons are extremely unreliable. In a sweet irony, they often do more damage to their Ratmen wielders than they do to their enemies.

"I take offence at that. Our weapons may not be quite as deadly to our enemies, but that doesn't mean that our engineering is lesser than the Skaven's. For my money, when a weapon explodes in your hands more often than at the enemy, it's not much of a weapon at all. Right?"

—Behram

Other Weapons

Beyond their warpfire weapons, the Skaven are also known to use the weapons of disease. Not content with the infection they spread through their wounds alone, some Skaven carry censers into combat, in which they burn noxious chemicals that blind and choke their enemies. For longer distances, some carry glass spheres also filled with poisonous gas. These can be thrown into a group of enemies, and the effects are disastrous. Once in my life I have come upon a unit of men hit by one of these gasses—to see their eyes writhing in their choking faces, blood gargling from their lungs, their tongues blackened with putrid sores: there was nothing Human left in them. It was a mercy to slit their throats, but their agonised faces haunt my nightmares still.

I have seen Skaven wearing strange masks over their mouths as they go into combat, so perhaps even their powerful constitutions can yield to these terrifying vapours. If the armies of the Empire would only admit to the existence of Skaven, they could work at producing such protection for our men. Until such time, cover your mouth and eyes if you spy green vapour, and pray for the countless good men lost for the sake of pride and ignorance.

"We dwarfs are hardy when it comes to poison and disease—hardier than you manlings anyway. Which is why a lot of my folk can't see why any Human would fight a Skaven—and why those that do so are welcomed as brethren by us Dwarfs, for they must have guts of iron, and hearts of steel."

—Behram

Other Physical Aspects

In truth, the entire body of the Skaven is a weapon, not simply the claws and teeth. Their powerful back legs let them pounce five times their height, both up and across, and run at twice the speed of a man. Their eyes are extremely sensitive, giving them perfect sight, even in pitch darkness. Their noses are even more honed: they can smell an intruder from half a mile away, and are almost impossible to ambush as a result, unless you hide your scent. But all too often, we hunters are sensed and discovered, and then that terrifying speed and powerful muscle puts those claws to work.

"Humans don't like it, but I find a good squeeze of rats' blood into the hair and beard keeps the Skaven's noses confused. Long enough for you to get your axe into their brains, anyway."

—Behram

As well as strength and speed, the Skaven have incredible constitutions. Though they often carry great plagues (both deliberately and accidentally), they rarely fall victim to such things themselves, and then only to the most virulent strains. The Skaven, it seems, are the ultimate

survivors: all but immune to disease and infection, able to live in any environment, even the most disgusting, and able to nourish themselves on anything at all, be it rotting corpses, or sewer scum, or even Warpstone! No siege could ever last against them, for they will even turn and eat their own kind when hungry enough—and they breed fast enough to never run out of this particular food supply. If ever some truly great calamity destroyed all the mortal races of this world, I am sure that the Skaven would live on, in the ashes, battling only with the restless dead for dominion over the carcass of the world.

Diet

The Skaven can and do eat anything, but like most omnivores, they also have foods that they seek out regularly and in preference to others. For the Skaven, this is fresh, raw meat.

I estimate that about a quarter of *all* the meat goods produced in the Empire—one carcass of every four—are devoured or destroyed by Skaven. They claim livestock from our farms (the extensively mutilated corpses left behind after this often leads farmers to blame fantastical beasts such as Wyverns for theses attacks), steal from the stockyards and warehouses, and find their way into the cold stores of taverns, inns and manor houses, all for the lure of fresh meat. Of course, the reason they only take cow, pig or goat is because Human flesh is slightly harder to obtain. When it is easily procured, however—say if they find a lone traveller in the wilderness, or a child too far from his home—they take such pleasure whenever they can.

"Funny thing is, they'll eat Dwarfs sure enough, but if there are Humans around, they always take them first. I reckon we Dwarfs don't taste very nice—we're all gristle and bone, see."

—Behram

Once I sat and watched a hive of them, timing how often they came to eat from their pile of corpses. By my reckoning, the Skaven need to eat five times a day. The individual meals are not large, but in total a Skaven eats at least its own weight in raw meat every day. The stronger typically eat more, and those who are denied this quota are easily spotted for their weaker frames and protruding ribs. If they are denied food long enough, they go mad, sinking into a frothing berserker rage. Under the effects of this "black hunger" as Leiber called it, they lose their natural cautiousness, knowing no pain or fear in their blood-fury, and their ravages will not be stop until they have eaten their fill, or are killed. Take no chances with a wild, hungry Skaven, and do not lower your guard until you are very sure it has ceased twitching.

I suspect this great appetite is necessary to fuel their seemingly exhaustible speed and ferocity—which in turn guarantees they acquire their next meal. In the face of such inexhaustible hunger, I can almost feel pity for these creatures, for what must life be like to be constantly needing to seek out the next meal, and the next, and the next?

Breeding

We can form a true understanding of our enemy's drive for battle when we look at their rapacious hunger in context with their incredible fecundity. Skaven females seem rare, perhaps one in ten of the Skaven population, and certainly are never seen on the surface. I approximate that they reach breeding age in just two years (whereas male Skaven require five years to be fully grown) and from that point on spend the rest of their lives in a constant cycle of breeding and nursing.

"The only thing that breeds faster than rats is the Skaven. One time, while cleaning out a tunnel, my cousin and I fell through a weak spot into one of the birthing chambers. It was like an ocean of fur. You couldn't count them all, but there was a hundred if there was one. Of all different ages, some still sightless, some weaned and ready to kill. And at the top of it all, a great big mother Skaven, suckling two dozen young at her hairy breast. My cousin was never right after that day—he kept muttering there were too many of them, they had to be every damn where. A few months later, he stood up a second too early and got a Warpstone bullet through his skull. Damn shame."

—Behram

I have consulted various scholars of natural history, and looked long and hard at the unbounded populations of Skaven, and made comparison to the common rat, and I have concluded that a litter of Skaven could contain between one and two dozen pups, and that a well-fed female could give birth to such a litter four or five times a year. That is to say, every Skaven female can produce over 100 offspring every single year. Even if only one tenth of these survive to adulthood (a rather hopeful figure for our sake, I fear), and only one tenth of those is female, a single female can produce more than 50 other females in 10 years, and a total of more than 1200 Skaven warriors in that same time. All from a single female! I must admit, the precise mathematics of this is beyond me (and I acknowledge the great help of the great mathematician Finnobacci of Tobaro in producing these figures) but I am assured they are correct, despite their terrifying proportions.

Yes, the Skaven are short-lived, with few lasting beyond their second decade of life, but even so, in one of those generations a single Skaven pair can produce more warrior offspring than there are people in Bögenhafen! It is thus easy to conclude that there is no sentient race on this earth as numerous as the Skaven. Yet even one alone is a great danger to all of us. This is an ill portent for the hope of mankind.

Habitat

Where then do all of these squirming Ratmen live? As discussed in the Liebkosen letter, they are creatures perfectly suited to the underground. When they do appear on the surface, they almost always do so at night, and stay to the darkness. Some have suggested, as with the owl, that the sunlight blinds their sensitive eyes, but we cannot be sure. The contrary seems to be true, however: the darkness causes them no disadvantage, nor do the cramped conditions of tunnels or sewers prevent them from bringing all their terrible strength to bear. Naturally they prefer to fight in these environments, for both of these conditions greatly hamper us Humans. Not only can we not see or manoeuvre, but we are also subject to irrational, primitive fears in dark, confined places. The Skaven may want to conquer the surface world, but they will always be at their most powerful beneath it.

In the cities, as is well known among their hunters, the Skaven use our own tunnels—our sewers and cellars and canals—for unrestricted travel. It would be comforting to think that their tunnels are far more primitive, but the Skaven are clever enough to build soundly. Their tunnels are wide and clear and difficult to destroy or block. If you mean to try to close off one of their routes, you will need a lot of time, and good picks and shovels.

I myself have never ventured beyond their transport tunnels, but I have heard tales of the rest of their network: vast caverns where the ceilings are 100 feet high, mine shafts that plumb hundreds of yards beneath the surface, massive nurseries where the young Skaven are stacked like firewood, gigantic Warpstone furnaces powering machines of unknown function and unimaginable design . . . and all of it connected by an impossibly huge network of tunnels that criss-crosses the entire Empire, running under every single city and every single village. Until we can begin to map this Under-Empire, we cannot hope to ever significantly defeat the Skaven. Yet how can we ever hope to model such an immense labyrinth, even if it were completely empty of our enemies?

"Leave tunnels for the Dwarfs, manlings, or at least take one of us with you if you must go down below. You'll only get lost down there alone. And there are more horrors in the dark than just the Skaven, trust me."

—Behram

Psychology

Combined within the Skaven are an unquenchable hunger and a population that is always explosively growing. No matter how large the Under-Empire is, we can see that it could never hold the Skaven race for long, nor would it ever provide enough food for the population. Thus, the Skaven make war upon us because if they do not claim the surface world and devour our food, their only alternative is death by starvation.

Hence the Skaven seeming to revel in slaughter as much as victory, for defeat equally serves the purpose of reducing their numbers. Hence the Skaven's failure to be deterred by any number of casualties, for there are always hundreds more to come in the warrens below. Hence the individual Skaven's lack of concern for any of his fellow Ratmen, for who would care for one life when there are so many ready to replace it, and when each of those lives could be content to let you die or outright kill you, should food become scarce?

This is the key to understanding how the Skaven think. Unlike Human and Dwarf, the Skaven have no fear of their race as a whole ever being annihilated. Instead, they fear only the opposite—that their numbers will become so great as to choke themselves with too many mouths to feed. Thus, they care not for any sense of victory for their race, and care only for the personal victories each individual Skaven can acquire for himself. We have all-too-often seen this same mentality among the men of the Empire, for when our borders are not threatened by the armies of Chaos, and we have no fear of our great nation falling, the noble lords of the Empire fall to squabbling amongst themselves for internal power.

"There is a Dwarf saying: 'He fights hardest whose back is against the Karak gates'. That's why Dwarfs fight harder than any manling—we've tasted so much of death and loss, we know exactly the price of defeat. No disrespect to you Humans and Halflings, but you have short lives and short memories, and know nothing of the true fear of extinction. The Skaven have no fear at all, and only fight because another, bigger Skaven will whip them if they do not. I've seen many a Human like that, too, come to think of it."

—Behram

With nothing to fear, the Skaven have nothing to fight for beyond their own desires. Hence they have no honour, no sense of the greater good, no understanding of glorious sacrifice. Hence their famous cowardice, for they have nothing to risk in running from a battle. But do not think then that we should stay our hand in demanding their destruction, lest we teach them courage. For the explosive population that fuels their confidence will also never cease to demand more food, more space and more slaves. So as long as even one Skaven lives, they will exist only to consume us all, and the battle between our two races can only be resolved by the complete extermination of the other.

I do not plan on it being our race that falls.

Society

What can be said then of the culture and society of the Ratman, given their psychology of total self-interest and constant hunger? In short, the Skaven life is one of constant warfare. Just as they constantly rise against men and Dwarfs to seek their basic needs for food and space, they also constantly fight amongst themselves to ensure the greatest access and control over these resources. In the Skaven world, not unlike our own, the strongest eats the best portion, and every other rat plots to take that place for himself.

So ingrained is this struggle that the Skaven have created a social structure around it. Skaven society is, I have deduced, divided into several levels. The white- and grey-haired rats belong to the priestly class, which rules over the others. Next come the dark-furred rats, of the warrior class. Then the brown rats form the lowest class, and serve as slaves to the others. I believe there may also be further classifications across these groups, as well—sects trained specifically for one sort of role, such as creating weapons or building tunnels. All of these groupings allow the Skaven to apply their urge for social climbing on a much larger scale, each sect battling for supremacy over the other, just as each Skaven battles for supremacy within his sect. Outright warfare is avoided by the Skaven priests keeping tight control over their brethren, although no doubt they only maintain this respect through a regime of terror and cruelty.

"They got regiments, sure enough. The ones with the Rat-Ogres, they dress differently from the ones with the warpfire guns. The ones with the black fur always have better weapons, and better training. You can take heart in that—if you're facing the little brown-furred ones, they're far more likely to break and run. What's more, all these different groups make them twice as likely to back-bite each other, or to fall into squabbling. Just as our ancestors gave us all hidden strengths, the Gods give all our enemies hidden weaknesses. Sometimes, Grungni bless 'em, the Skaven will win the battle for you just by turning on themselves."

—Behram

Religion and Magic

"The sign of the rat. The three-bars-crossed. The cursed triangle. Know it well. For the Skaven can't go anywhere without marking it on the walls. You spot it, you know they're there. And they're proud of it too. They aren't quite so monstrous as to not rally to their banners, nor to rage when they're torn down. Break them or burn them, and you break their spirit, and send them packing."

—Behram

The Skaven are that most horrible of contradictions—completely bestial in their features and appetites, yet they walk like men, and model our human behaviours in their own sick and sordid fashion. So they, too, have their own religion, and worship their own twisted god: The Horned Rat. This entity is of course a Chaos God, but what relationship he has to the other Ruinous Powers is unknown. He is depicted as described: a gigantic Skaven with huge horns like a ram. The priests of this foul God always have light-coloured fur: grey or pure white. As indicated in the letter above, it seems some of them even have horns like their God. No doubt this is some dark blessing from being so close to his Chaos-taint, just as those mages who have great mastery over a certain Wind of Magic take on some aspects of that Wind.

Horned or not, these priest-Skaven have control over dark and powerful magic. Taking strength from their precious Warpstone, they can call up Chaos-fire to burn men where they stand, or send clouds of plague and pestilence without any need for glass globes or censers. I have reports of them disappearing into thin air only to reappear on the other side of the battlefield a moment later, of summoning hordes of smaller vermin to be their servants, and of instilling the black hunger in their troops with only a gesture. Any encounter with these priests is 10 times more dangerous than any other Skaven encounter, and they should never be engaged without human Wizards in your party.

The power of their faith does not end with magic, however. The Skaven in general are deeply religious. All of them fear the wrath of their Horned God, and they gain much courage and fury from that fear. Almost all of them carry or wear his symbol, or paint it on their flesh: three crossed lines, forming an inverted triangle. Those foolish or treacherous humans who fall in with the Skaven may also wear such symbols, and the Skaven carve it into buildings they inhabit, so be ever on the lookout for the sign. Take no notice of the Human priests and scholars who tell you it is nothing but some random scratches.

The Skaven use other symbols as well. I have seen enough scratches in their lairs to believe they are not random, and it would be foolish arrogance to believe they could not have developed some kind of written language. For, truth be told, the Skaven are far cleverer than any beast, and also many men.

Technology

"Technology is just a fancy word for engineering that don't work."

—Behram

Almost all the power of the twisted Skaven intellect goes into making weapons, but that is far from the end of their dark designs. As with their weapons, their mastery of the sciences is unbound by concerns of efficiency or safety, and stretches far beyond the limits of the minds of men.

A comrade of mine who escaped from the hellish pits of Skavenblight has told me stories of gigantic treadmill devices, producing great strikes of lightning for a purpose he could never discover. There were also giant mining carts used to transport Warpstone, running on iron rails with no beast to pull them. That Warpstone was fed into gigantic forges and foundries, which belched black and green smoke constantly. What they were building with these cannot be guessed, but we can be sure it is something designed to wreak havoc and disaster upon humanity. Again, we are crippled by our lack of knowledge; though the Skaven lurk just below our surface world, and know all our secrets, we know nothing of their world below, or what they are truly doing down there.

"Whatever the Skaven are building, it's no science of any Dwarf-kind. The steam they make eats through the rock walls, gets into the water and makes it deadly poison. Then that water flows into the soil and everything growing on the surface rots and dies. It eats through metal, too, I reckon, so everything they build must fall apart twice as fast, and when they explode they'll just dump more of that junk into our mountains and ancient Dwarf holds. When we take them back, there may be nothing left to reclaim, and the air too toxic to breath. The Skaven are to engineering what Warpstone is to flesh—they pervert and destroy all that was natural and strong."

—Behram

Skaven Hunters I Have Known

Volpone Geisser: A lieutenant in the Altdorf City Watch, Volpone has not fought many Skaven himself, but keeps a keen eye on those streets, watching for any crime that may be the actions of the Ratmen.

Behram Gundarson: Behram had his brains scattered by a Skaven rock-trap while he was a Shieldbreaker, and is a little maddened as a result, but there is no Dwarf braver or more dedicated to wiping out the Skaven. I have travelled far with him, and learnt much.

El Gatto del San Stefenato: El Gatto was a Tilean Judicial Champion until he discovered his prince was in league with the Ratmen. He slew his own master and brought his incredible mastery of weapons with him in exile to crush the Empire's Skaven.

Ghost Strider Jian: An Elf from Laurelorn, Jian knows little of our Human ways, but she is a master of the bow. She equally hates the Skaven for murdering her brother and the Human authorities for covering it up.

Fassbinder the Strong: This young Halfling crawled out alive after 10 long years in the mines of Skavenblight. His suffering has made him stronger, both in mind and body, than any man I have ever met.

Gotrek Gurnisson: I had the privilege of meeting this legendary warrior once, with his companion Felix Jaeger. I can attest that he is every bit as impressive in the flesh as he is in Jaeger's accounts!

We do know, however, that both their insane science and their dark magic depend wholly on one thing: Warpstone. Darkstone, the curse of mages, the stone more precious than gold: this substance has been a black plague upon humanity through all of history. All scholars recognise its power, yet only the insane would ever use it, for it destroys the flesh with only the lightest touch, and it corrupts all that surrounds it to the ways of Chaos. Yet, to once again prove their perverse nature, it is this cursed stone that is essential to all Skaven society. They use it to create their poisons and their diseases, they use it to power their daemonic devices and their evil spells, and they shape it into their blades and their pistols. I have once even witnessed some of their Chaos priests eating crystals of the stone, and rubbing it in powdered form into their fur. If there was ever proof that these beasts were an inversion of all that is good and natural, it is here, in their addiction to this most unnatural and unholy of elements.

Yet it is here also that we may find a weakness in our enemy. Warpstone is such a mainstay of their society that they trade in it, using it like currency to purchase weapons or troops. Denying them this substance would not only cause their scientific and magical powers to weaken and collapse, it would also cause their culture to destroy itself. As we have seen, starving out the Skaven is no solution, for they only become more dangerous when enraged with hunger. Killing them only frees up space and resources for the next generation. But if we were to starve them of Warpstone, we could deny them one of their most deadly weapons against us without empowering their warriors, without helping them control their population, and without any reduction in our own arsenal.

Of course, there is no known method for disposing of this cursed stone, but I believe we must begin to search most fervently for such a thing. For here we have a chance to begin chipping away at the Skaven empire just as assuredly as they have chewed away at ours for thousands of years. Warpstone is an extremely dangerous and deadly material, but if we can control its supply, we can control the Skaven. And if we can control them, we can defeat them.

Chronicles of the Skaven

In all my travels, I have found no two histories of the Skaven that agree. Some say they are a strain of Beastmen that developed to live underground, others that their ancestors were simply normal rats mutated to unnatural size after years spent in contact with deadly Warpstone. I have heard learned academics argue proofs that they came down upon us from Morrslieb itself, brave sailors have whispered that they are men cursed for committing the great crime of cannibalism, and a priest in Blutroch once swore to me that his sister had birthed an entire litter of them after visiting the sinful streets of Nuln.

The best I can provide, then, is the oldest tale I have encountered. This is from an ancient collection of legends, now a religious relic kept in the Temple of Ulric in Middenheim. The book is titled "Lord Ulric and the Making of the World" and neither the author nor collator is known.

The Great Battle and the Rise of the Skaven

There was a time, when the world was young and man had just come forth onto the earth, that there was no taint of Chaos upon the land. Father Taal and Mother Rhya tended the things of the land, and their son Manann was master of the things of the sea. Morr was king of the darkness, and Verena the queen of the light, and so all was in balance. In the high summers, Lord Ulric, brother of Taal and prince of the snow and ice, had no realm to tend to, so he had taken to walking the earth and the sky and the stars to seek adventure. He travelled far beyond the ken of man or God, fought and slew the greater monsters and dragons and gave names to all the wonders that he found. With him in many of these journeys came his cousin, Prince Ranald the Trickster, and many are the tales told of these two friends and their brave deeds. But all journeys must end, and this is the tale of their last journey together.

Ulric and Ranald had journeyed far to the north, farther than any God or man had ever gone before, into the frozen wastes, where the air is so cold it freezes like the water and the earth shatters under your feet like the first film of ice on the lake, and no man nor Dwarf can survive. And here, at the very top of the world, Ulric and Ranald came upon a crack in the sky. Looking through it, they saw a great horror: it led to the Realm of Chaos. There stood all the beasts and Daemons and Gods of Chaos, a great and terrible horde, straining to widen the crack and hungry for conquest of this new world. Ulric knew that should this army breach the gate, all of this world would be forever destroyed. He called to his brother Ranald to immediately run to tell Father Taal and King Morr of what they had seen, so they might make ready their armies to drive back this horde. Ulric said he would stand at the crack and hold it closed as long as he could.

Ranald nodded to his brother, and ran. But the Trickster was a coward, and when he had seen the Chaos hordes he had known only fear. Instead of running to tell his Lords and family what had happened, he instead ran and hid. He ran far, far away, to the burning deserts in the south, and buried himself deep under the sand there. Ulric waited at the crack, holding it closed with all his might, though on the other side a million Daemons clawed and grabbed at it, desperate to tear it further and gain their entry. Ulric stood and held the gate for a thousand years and one, his muscles ever-straining with the effort, waiting for his cousin to return. But he never returned. Enraged at his brother's cowardice, Ulric swore never to speak to his brother again, nor ever to suffer a trickster to travel with him, for all that trusted in tricks were nought but cowards, weaklings and deceivers.

Finally, Ulric's strength began to wane, and he knew his weakling brother had not delivered the message. He knew too, that he could not hold the gate closed much longer. So despite his fears, he was forced to let go and bear the terrible news to his family himself. But when he arrived to do so, he found himself ignored and discounted. His brother Taal did not believe that there could be another world beyond his, and Manann had no care for things of the land. Great King Morr believed Ulric's story, but did not see a great danger—certainly it was nothing Ulric himself could not handle. Ulric despaired, knowing that even now the Chaos hordes must be pouring into their world, led by their own great and hideous Gods, ready to destroy all they had made.

Finally, he appealed to Queen Verena, and in her wisdom, she saw that the danger was indeed very real and very great, and that these fiends would destroy all of the Beauty and Reason she had created. She swore that even if her husband would not act, she would, and she took up her husband's sword and rode out to battle with brave Lord Ulric. And to this day, Verena still carries that sword, as a reminder to Morr and to all her subjects that wisdom must be joined with action, lest all wisdom be lost.

Shamed into action by his Queen, Morr rallied all the Gods behind him, and all their loyal followers, and rode out to meet the Chaos Gods and their armies. Morr was no great warrior,

and Ulric had proven his wisdom in seeing the danger, so Morr gave over to Ulric command of all the Gods' forces, and Ulric thence became the God of Battle. Wearing his great helm and swinging his massive hammer, Ulric led the Gods forth to meet their enemy. And where the hoof beats of their horses fell, they cut a trail of mud far deep into the earth, and the sea rushed in to fill it up, and became the great river Reik. All the while, the Chaos Daemons ran on their claws of fire and blood, so sharp that they bit into the very land itself, which is why the coast of Norsca is now so ragged and torn.

The two forces met with uncontained fury. The Chaos force was uncountable in number, unending in hunger, unimaginable in savagery. Yet Ulric's courage never faltered. His fury would not abate, and his strength did never waver. He smashed the Chaos ranks with his great hammer, breaking every charge that came. Behind him rode King Morr, bringing the darkness of death, and Queen Verena with her sword of light, and Father Taal with the fury of the lion, and Mother Rhya with the strength of the mother bear, and Manaan brought the sea forth into the field, dragging thousands of Daemons down into his realm where he could choke the life out of them. Still the Daemons and Chaos monsters came on, still the Gods of Light fought back. The battle raged for a thousand years, until at last all the armies of Chaos were routed, and the Chaos Gods themselves were smashed to pieces beneath Ulric's great hammer.

But the victory was not without cost. Thousands of the Gods' servants lay dead. Lesser Gods and heralds had been lost forever from the world. The Dragons that had fought with the Gods had seen most of their number fall. And worst of all, King Morr himself was gravely wounded. He lived, but was forced to find succour in the Dark Lands and was never more seen on this earth. Seeing all this suffering and loss, Queen Verena fell to her knees and cried. And her tears flowed over the battlefield, and from them came the Goddess Shallya, bringing her mercy and healing to the injured and despairing.

Exhausted and grief-stricken, Ulric and his fellow Gods left the battlefield, carrying all their dead home to give them proper burial. But here was their great mistake. For the bodies of the Chaos hordes still lay on the battlefield, a vast carpet of carnage. And on top of it all lay the hideous bodies of the Chaos Gods themselves. As they lay there rotting, there came what always must come to battlefields: a plague of rats to feast upon the dead.

And with such a feast, the rats came in their thousands, then in their millions. They fed on the beasts of Chaos and the Daemons and the monsters. So great was the frenzy of feasting that the rats grew gigantic with the food, and fought savagely with each other for the greatest spoils. Finally, the largest and strongest rats fell upon the Chaos Gods themselves, and as they did they gained something of their nature. They grew even more in size, and in cunning and in brutality, into things that were a mockery of man himself.

And so it was, when Ulric returned to the battlefield, he saw the rats feasting, and realised his great mistake. In their great consumption the rats had taken on a remnant of those foul Gods' power, and become like them: a new race, like the Humans and the Dwarfs, only made from pure Chaos. They, like all things of Chaos, would work forever to destroy Humanity and all he had built, and to one day bring about the victory the Chaos Gods had been denied. He saw too that the Daemon troops that had been routed had returned and carried away what was not eaten, and then had fled to the darkest corners of the world. They, too, these Beastmen, would watch and wait for their chance to reclaim the world from Men and Dwarfs. Ulric had saved the earth, but he had doomed the mortals who lived there to ever face the threat of a similar destruction.

Although it was too late, Ulric struck his hammer hard on the stony ground and brought forth a great flame with it. And with that flame he burnt all that foul offal that remained to ashes. Then he charged his brother Manann to drown the whole field with water so it could never more taint the land. The waters of the ocean poured over the field, and it became the Sea of Chaos.

Then Ulric turned to the fate of the Men. He taught them how to mould steel to make hammers and swords and axes, and taught them how to wield them. He taught them how to fight, and to hunt, and to kill. And lastly he taught them how to make fire and how to use it. All of this was to prepare them for their endless battle with the minions of Chaos. He taught them well, and gave them courage. He took charge over Mankind, and promised he would ever watch over them, for now their lives would know only battle. In return, the people of Ulric pledged to never suffer a Chaos-thing to live while they had breath in their bodies, and to ensure that every beast of Chaos that fell would be burned to ash, cleansed from this world by Ulric's Holy Fire. Thus, the taint of Chaos would never spread again. Ulric's mistake must never be repeated, and creatures like the Skaven must never again be born unto this world. And so we keep our pact forevermore. We strike without fear against the Ratmen, and the Beastmen, and all the creatures of Chaos, and raise the cleansing flame of Ulric to all the heavens above.

The Doom That Came To Kavzar

Probably the most persistent Skaven myth is the story of the Doom of Kavzar, or the Thirteen Tolls of the Bell. The version most commonly referenced by scholars is an ancient epic poem of 13 stanzas, in either the original Tilean or a translation. However, questions have always been raised about the origins of this tale, especially since, despite the poem's name, it never mentions Kavzar in the text, and Kavzar is hardly a Tilean

name to begin with. In my research I discovered an even older version of the tale that the Dwarfs have held for millennia, and which is clearly a precursor to the Tilean work. The description of events is almost identical between the two, although the Dwarf poem paints the Dwarfs in a far more favourable light than the Human version, where the Dwarfs are slanderously depicted as uncaring of any Human suffering.

The poem is of course originally in Khazalid. In presenting it here in Reikspiel, I am much indebted to the great Dwarf scholar Svenrik Blackhammer, whose translation, unlike all others of this or the Tilean poem, preserves both the rhyme and rhythm of the original. As with the Tilean legend, however, the author of the original remains unknown.

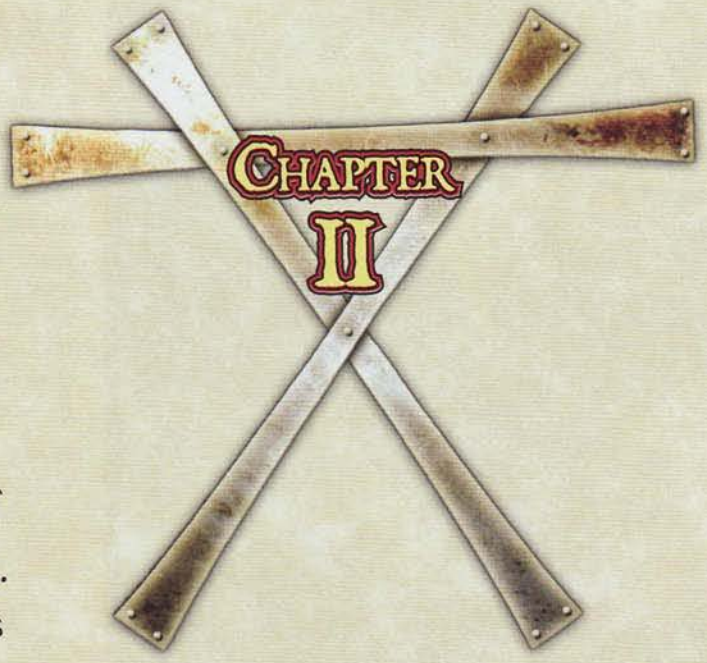
The Doom That Came To Kavzar

Once a tall and ancient city
Stood atop an ancient hill
There within both Dwarf and manlings
Built that city to their will
'Pon the surface lived the manlings
Dwarfs lived in the earth below
And none that dwelt in all of Kavzar
Knew of want or knew of woe
All around that fabled city
Rich and lush the fields did grow
And 'neath the hills that offered shelter
The richest veins of ore did flow
And the streets were paved with silver
And the buildings made of gold
And wise and true were those of Kavzar
Hearts of giving, spirits bold.
And seeing all the Gods had given
The Men of Kavzar fell to praise
The Men of Kavzar dreamed a temple
For their greater Gods to raise
And on this great and godly temple
Raise a great and godly tower
So all who came to know of Kavzar
Would know their Gods' almighty power.
The Men of Kavzar were not builders:
Dwarf counsel first they sought
They summoned all their greatest craftsmen
And the finest stone they bought
Carefully they planned their tower
To touch the very skies above
So the Gods could see the works of Kavzar
And look upon them with their love.
Days to weeks and weeks to months
The men of Kavzar laboured still
Soon did spring turn into summer
And summer turned to winter chill
Weeks to months and months to years
Still the building was not done
And so the great craftsmen of Kavzar
Passed their task on to their sons.
A hundred years soon came and went
At last the mighty temple stood
Made of Gromril, jade and marble
And all agreed that it was good
And up above it stretched the tower
Reaching an unearthly height
And all of those who dwelt in Kavzar
Stood in awe at such a sight
But now the craftsmen tasted failure
For their tower was so tall
No pulley could be raised atop it
And a climber sure to fall
No way was there to reach the vertex
No way to fit the crowning spire
And all of those who dwelt in Kavzar
Wept to see their dreams expire

Then came unto that town of sorrow
A stranger in a hood and cowl
And as he came the sky grew darker
As he came the wind did howl
But he promised them his magic
Promised them the spire raised
And all of those who dwelt in Kavzar
Begged for him to lend his ways
But the stranger first did bargain
Bargained for but one demand
That upon the temple's tower
A totem of his God might stand
The folk of Kavzar saw no danger
The folk of Kavzar trusted well
And all of those who dwelt in Kavzar
Gave him leave to work his spells
All and one went to their houses
And at midnight back they crept
Was the stranger's magic greater?
Was the stranger's promise kept?
They looked and saw atop that steeple
There did swing a screaming bell
And all of those who dwelt in Kavzar
Knew it rang their own death knell
Once and twice and thrice it rang
Four and five, and six and seven
Eight, nine, ten, and then eleven
Twelve dark rings that shook the heavens
Then at last it rang thirteen
And with it fell a rain like stones
And all of those who dwelt in Kavzar
Ran in fear back to their homes
They rose to find the day in darkness
An endless storm above their town
Lightning struck their mighty tower
Thunder shook the very ground
And through the storm there came a ringing:
Thirteen tolls of that dread bell
And all of those who dwelt in Kavzar
Watched their city turn to hell.
Days to weeks and weeks to month
The rain poured down and brought the flood
The fields so rich and lush were poisoned
The hills sent down great slides of mud
And the streets no more were silver
And the buildings lost their gold
Pity those who dwelt in Kavzar:
Hearts despairing, spirits cold
The folk of Kavzar sent out riders
Seeking help from far and wide
But if any breached the tempest's shadow
None returned from that dread ride
The men of Kavzar prayed to heaven
That their Gods might end their pain
But all the folk who dwelt in Kavzar
Had no reply but endless rain

Down to the underearth they went
Dwarfen help they came to sue
Dwarfen help they were not given
For the dwarfs did suffer too
Rats had eaten through their food-stores
Floods ran through their halls of stone
And so the men who dwelt in Kavzar
Were left to face their doom alone
Plague and fever came upon them
Tainting what was left to eat
Men lay dying in their hundreds
Men lay dying in the street
Then the storm sent stones of fire
Burning what they did not smash
The manlings wept as all of Kavzar
Fell to rubble, and to ash
With Chaos Gods the men now pleaded
And newborn babes were twisted freaks
And old and young as one were blighted
And the strong fell with the weak
And all the while up on the tower
Thirteen times that bell did peal
Thirteen rings 'cross all of Kavzar
Thirteen rings their doom to seal
Then came the twisted, evil Skaven
Rats as like as men in size
Claws as sharp as twice-forged axes
Bloody hunger in their eyes
The Skaven came on in their thousands
The Skaven rushed through all the town
What few who still did live in Kavzar
Ran for safety underground.
Ran into that Dwarf stronghold
And saw their ending, all too late
The Dwarfs had met the Skaven also
And had shared the manlings' fate
Back to back they stood together
Dwarf and man fought to the last
But none of those who dwelt in Kavzar
Would live to see that battle past
Tearing, biting, all devouring!
The Skaven chewed on flesh and bone
And Man and Dwarf did fall together
Their blood spilled o'er the ancient stone
Thirteen tolls rang from the tower
To celebrate that city seized
Now all of those who dwelt in Kavzar
Were our greatest enemies.
Heed ye well this tale's lessons:
Dwarf and man must stand as one!
And never trust a stranger's bargain
Or all we build may come undone!
Drive out Chaos, never resting!
Drive out Chaos, large or small!
For the doom that came to Kavzar
May one day come to claim us all!

Skaven History



"Who are the Skaven? Not even the Ratmen can say."

—Kunder von Sprelt

Manlings will fall! Yes-yes..in time...

Man-flayer, of Clan Mors

The Skaven care little for the past, and do not keep any recorded history. For a Skaven, there are only two times worth thinking about: right now, when they are not ruling the world, and very soon, when they will be. The only history the Skaven do consider worthy of thought is personal, rather than racial. One might recall such things as the glory days when he rose in power in his sect, or the despicable enemy that brought about his downfall, but rarely would think about his origins, or any great achievements of any Skaven not himself. They have no rituals or remembrances of their dead, and old objects are simply cannibalised to make new ones.

The Skaven also have no use for a calendar. For the scheduling of military attacks or planning of large constructions, Skaven reckon time based solely on practical matters, such as food stops, sunsets, or the phases of the Chaos moon Morrslieb. Beyond this, they have no concept of times or dates, nor years, generations or ages.

Therefore, the history of the Skaven remains unknown and mostly unknowable to the inhabitants of the Old World. The Skaven themselves do not care about it, and the few Humans who make an effort to collect and catalogue it find themselves facing insurmountable difficulties. The only sources available are those few Humans who witnessed the culmination of Skaven plans and somehow manage to live to tell of it. Moreover, it is clear that many Human agents, for reasons both nefarious and well-intentioned, have actively purged or altered what few records exist of the Ratmen's actions, and persecute those who search these areas too deeply.

Why they should do this remains as unknown as every other aspect of the Skavens' convoluted schemes. Regardless, the impact is undeniable: the precious few collected histories of the Skaven are sparse, conflicting, and full of guesswork, and those brave few who try to expand them find themselves constantly frustrated, if not burnt at the stake. The history provided below, therefore, cannot be attributable to any inhabitant of the Old World, and should be treated accordingly.

The First Wave

Much of the story related in the *Doom That Came to Kavzar* is accurate. The community was founded by one of the first tribes of Humans, between the Iranna Mountains to the north and the Tilean Sea to the south. Not long after it was settled, a group of Dwarfs looking for ore deposits found the area also. Immediately recognising the richness of the mountains and the soil below, the two races formed an alliance. Humans and Dwarfs worked and lived in perfect harmony, each helping the other according to their strengths.

Although they lived apart—Humans on the surface, Dwarfs below—the Dwarfs provided the necessary stone, metal and craftsmanship for the human city to grow, while the Humans worked the fields to feed the populations of both cities. The prosperity of the lands and the mountains and the cooperation between the two great races allowed the city to rise to incredible heights of architecture and culture within a single generation. Their building techniques and engineering skills were the greatest ever seen on the surface of the Old World, and it would be centuries before any Human settlement would even come close to the wonders of the streets of the city. The crowning jewel of the city was their

great tower, which remains unrivalled as the highest structure ever erected in the Old World—and, if legend is to be believed, it extended an equal distance below the earth as well.

Yet despite all their great science, the city builders could not raise the final keystone to the pinnacle of their mighty tower. It was then that the "hooded stranger" mentioned in the Kazvar myth appeared. The identity of this figure is the most mysterious question surrounding the Skaven, and remains unanswered. The Skaven, in the very rare times they speak of their origins, refer to this figure as "The Shaper," who is said to be of an "older race" than theirs. This, combined with the rain of Warpstone summoned from the sky, points to the most likely conclusion: that the Shaper was one of the Old Ones, and that the first Screaming Bell (known to the Skaven as the Great Shrieking Bell) hung from the top of the tower of the city—a device designed to call down meteorites from the heavens themselves.

Whatever the true identity and purpose of the stranger, the awesome power attributed to the bell is difficult to believe. With its peals, it brought down endless rain, mist and chill, wrapping that once-great city in a prison of darkness and deprivation. Then came the deluge of Warpstone, twisting the landscape beneath forever more. The crops were poisoned, the ore corroded, and the Humans and Dwarfs annihilated by disease, starvation and murder. Even the city itself, its great and glorious architecture, was twisted and perverted by that rain of pure Chaos, remade into a cyclopean maze as hideous as it once was beautiful. And as the people perished and the town was reborn, so too were created the creatures that would devour those few left alive, and who would forever after call this mockery of a city their home. The Ratmen were born in slaughter, and their very first act was genocide.

Skavenblight

Kavzar was no more and Skavenblight was born, but this would not be the end of the Ratmen. In the years that followed the destruction of Kavzar they lay low in the world, growing fat on the resources acquired when they overthrew the city. It is believed that they were content with their new home, breeding in the warrens beneath and always searching for more Warpstone. One imagines there must have been great infighting and wars amongst their kind, as the creatures are a notoriously treacherous race. And they grew stronger as they culled the weak. But to the rest of the world the Ratmen remained hidden, a nightmare best forgotten, a plague amongst the swampy ruins of a long dead city.

About 1600 years before the birth of Sigmar, the Ratmen surfaced once more. Out of the black pits of madness the creatures we recognize today as Skaven emerged from the warrens. With keen intelligence and humanoid bodies, these beings were the absolute masters of Skavenblight, and over the centuries they used Warpstone to learn the ways of magic. But after hundreds of years the Skaven depleted the Warpstone in the ruins of their city, forcing them to venture farther and farther outward to find this sacred substance. And the world was dangerous indeed, filled with Orcs and Goblins, migrating tribes of Human savages, and worse. The Skaven knew that the world awaited its true masters, so to achieve the conquest they felt was inevitable, the Skaven withdrew to Skavenblight to devise some way to crush the world between their paws.

Disaster at Skavenblight

Despite every obstacle, every new plague, and the ongoing scarcity of food, the Skaven thrived in the tunnels of Skavenblight. In time there were so many of them that they had to expand their tunnels even farther, but they could not burrow fast enough to create more room. So the Skaven called upon the sorcerers to do something, to open a space where all Skaven could live and prosper. The antecedents of the Grey Seers planned to open a great rift beneath the earth that would provide room enough for all. So they constructed a terrible machine powered by Warpstone to capture and bend the energies of magic, a machine that would split the rocks beneath the mountains.

For decades they laboured until finally, in a grand ceremony in a specially excavated chamber beneath Skavenblight, the sorcerers activated their sinister machine. They summoned forth the loose energy coursing beneath the earth, forcing it into their mad invention of iron and brass. The machine shuddered and smoked as more and more energy filled its coils. Just as the sorcerers believed they had accumulated enough and ceased their chanting, the machine vomited forth showers of sparks and caused the very earth to rumble. The ground shook, causing the great bell in the temple above to ring. A great rift began to appear in the earth and it seemed the Skaven's mad plan would work. But it was not to be. The machine failed and with a thundering flash it split open, releasing all the pent up energy, tearing through the tunnels and ripping hundreds of

Shared Myths

Most of the races and nations of the Old World recall these migrations in their myths and legends. In Kislev they are presented as the actions of Ursun's evil brother, who became Father of Rats and drove his servants northward to punish his brother's pride. In Norsca they mixed with the legends of the sea-demons and were said to have been driven back into the ocean through the singing of the old songs. In Araby their invasion was called the Scouring of Scholars, with the creatures seen as a holy punishment upon men who trusted too much in science, and in Cathay they were said to have been vomited out from the gigantic maw of the Great Black Dragon that lives coiled inside the earth.

Perverse Science

Another reason Dwarfs despise the Skaven so greatly is that the Ratmen are their only rivals in the art of science and engineering. However, where the Dwarfs enshrine precise craftsmanship and enduring results, the Skaven are the opposite, quite happy to throw anything together that works, not caring at all if it blows up after a few uses. The Dwarfs take this as an insult against the whole concept of craftsmanship and injurious to their pride, especially since—precisely because they never need to worry about safety or efficiency—Skaven technology continues to outstrip their own.

Skaven into furry gobbets as it shattered Skavenblight. Ceilings collapsed, killing thousands more, and the destructive energy spread out from Skavenblight in all directions. The ancient city sank with a tortured rumble as the sea washed in to drown the tortured land.

Though the city was in ruins, it was at this moment that new masters emerged amongst the Skaven. The Council of Thirteen formed to lead the Skaven. The surviving sorcerers founded the Order of the Grey Seers to act as advisors and to lead the Skaven into a glorious future.

Aftermath and Expansion

After the earthquakes collapsed Skavenblight and buried it under the foul waters, it was clear that the Skaven would have to expand. The calamity only worsened the food shortages and limited living space. And so, the Skaven spread throughout the Old World, migrating to new lands to find resources and to expand their control over the world. The migrating Skaven established strongholds in the Southlands, Araby, and the Dark Lands. Lord Malkrit, one of the Council of Thirteen, led Clan Moulder to a place that would become known as Hell Pit. Lord Viskrin instructed Clan Eshin to establish a stronghold in far Cathay. Some Skaven even crossed the seas to found societies beneath the humid jungles of Lustria.

The Crushing of the Dwarfs

While the Great Sniff, as the Skaven call this time, was spreading the toxic presence of the Ratmen to every corner of the globe, their armies that remained in the Old World set themselves a single fanatical goal: the total extinction of the Dwarf race. This was a goal they shared with the Greenskin forces, and the two races formed an unholy alliance to see it through. Unlike the Skaven, however, who fought for territory or dominance, the Orcs and Goblins fought because it was all they knew. While perhaps not as cunning as their Ratmen allies, their warriors were far more practiced. As a result, and because the Skaven used skirmishing and ambush tactics rather than savage frontal assaults, it was the unrelenting ferocity of the Greenskins that became most remembered by the Dwarfs, and that race became first named in their great Book of Grudges.

Not that the Dwarfs were unaware of their Skaven enemies, nor do they today lack a thirst to revenge themselves upon the Ratmen for their countless atrocities. Indeed, without the Skaven, the Greenskin armies would never have penetrated the deeply hidden Dwarfhold of Karak Ungor. Skaven sappers were also responsible for the flooding of Karak Varn a year later, and the Dwarfs still tell of the hideous sight afterwards, as the Ratmen feasted on the bloated corpses of their drowned comrades.

After these early victories, the combined Skaven and Greenskin forces attacked the southern mountains from both sides and slowly drove the Dwarfs northwards. The Dragonback Peaks were soon abandoned, and every Karak farther south was lost. The Dwarfs never stopped fighting, and as the war raged on for centuries, they lost and re-gained much of their ancient empire, over and over again. Yet the gains of their enemies steadily advanced. After a millennium of ceaseless battle, the Skaven and Greenskins had claimed such great holds as Karak Azul, Karak Drazh and Karak Eight Peaks, and in –380 IC the two armies poured their dark might down into the Dwarf capital of Karaz-a-Karak. For a moment it seemed as if the great, unshakeable empire of the Dwarfs had met its end, but the sound of Dwarfen defiance came in the form of the cannon's roar. The Dwarfs had mastered gunpowder, and used it at the battle Karaz-a-Karak in vast quantities to turn back the green and furry hordes.

The chances that the Dwarfs could have withstood another onslaught were low, but an event occurred which stopped that final blow from falling. Clan Pestilens returned to the Old World from Lustria to claim power for themselves, throwing the entire Skaven population into a chaotic and brutal civil war. At the same time, the Dwarfs found new allies in the rising Human populations. With two armies united against

now only one enemy, the Dwarfs were able to turn back the invasion of the Greenskins, and within a few centuries claimed a great decisive victory at the Battle of Black Fire Pass.

Nagash

The Dwarfs were not the only ones who stood in the Skaven's way. They coveted Nagashizzar and its Warpstone mines at Cripple Peak, but that land was ruled by a fell Necromancer called Nagash. The Skaven and the Necromancer's Undead legions fought for nearly a century, and though they weakened the Necromancer, the Ratmen were unable to vanquish him. Even if the Skaven were to break through his forces and confront the Wizard himself, the Grey Seers did not believe themselves capable of defeating him.

However, the devious Skaven knew that Nagash had many prisoners languishing in his dungeons, and believed that one of them surely would leap at the chance to kill his captor. To aid in the assassin's work, the Grey Seers created a weapon so potent that it would destroy both victim and wielder. The blade was forged from Warpstone mined in Cripple Peak and Gromril stolen from Karak Varn. Dire spells were put into the molten metal and the blade was quenched in acidic bile and magical toxins. Runes were carved along its length that were so deadly, to read them was death. Finally, a chunk of precisely cut Warpstone was embedded in the pommel that allowed the Skaven to see through the eyes of the wielder and to channel protective spells that might deflect Nagash's fell sorceries.

The Skaven crept into the Necromancer's lair through hidden tunnels until they came upon the cell of the chosen captive, a prince of the south. They freed him and gave him the sword. Filled with hate, he took up the blade. The Lords of Decay willed him towards the throne room. Wending his way through the labyrinthine passages, the prince finally came before Nagash on his throne, and attacked. The Necromancer defended himself, unleashing sorcerous energies so great that the backlash killed several of the Grey Lords. But the Human persevered, warded as he was by the Skaven and channelling their spells through his blade, hacking Nagash into nearly a thousand pieces. Waiting Skaven scurried from their hidden places and gathered up the pieces and cast them into the Warpstone forges, apparently destroying the Necromancer for all time.

With Nagash defeated and his armies scattered, the Skaven swiftly seized Nagashizzar and the mine of Cripple Peak. They enslaved the Humans of Nagash's empire and over the centuries mined huge amounts of Warpstone to bring back to Skavenblight. And at the centre of this activity was Clan Rikek, which became very wealthy as a result of the mining operations. However, in their foolish confidence they underestimated the might of Nagash. Centuries later Nagash returned with an army of Undead, crushing the clan in but a single night.

When the survivors brought news of Nagash's return, Skavenblight sent a massive army to besiege Nagashizzar before the Wizard could wreck vengeance upon the rest of the Skaven. After fighting for several months, however, it became clear that Nagash was sorely weakened by his "rebirth" and lacked the strength to continue any assault on the Skaven. Furthermore, since the Skaven had already exhausted the Warpstone mines beneath Cripple Peak, there was no reason to continue the costly war. And so the Skaven withdrew, leaving the Necromancer to moulder and stew.

The Rise of Clan Pestilens

As previously mentioned, the return of Clan Pestilens to the Old World was a turning point for the Skaven, one that both helped and hurt their foes. Clan Pestilens had journeyed during the first migration to the rotting jungles of Lustria. There they had been beset by rampant diseases, decimating their numbers. After a few of the creatures' short generations, the Skaven developed resistances to these deadly plagues and actually came to see the pestilence as the true work of the Horned Rat.

The Clan settled in a pre-Human temple in the Lustrian interior and learned many terrible things from the degenerate inhabitants, from the carvings on still visible on the walls, and from the foul catacombs beneath. With each generation Clan Pestilens grew stronger, fighting the Lizardman warriors in the caverns and surrounding jungles. They enslaved and sacrificed thousands to the unholy Horned Rat and became more and more obsessed with worship and ceremony. Eventually they became devoted disciples of decay, blessed with the Horned Rat's vision of corruption.

Once they exhausted the lands around them, these so-called Plague Monks decided that it was time to return to their kin in the Old World. A great migration of Clan Pestilens and its

slaves carved its way through the jungles to the shores of the ocean. There, the Plague Monks had the slaves create crude barges to carry them across the sea, and cross them they did, making landfall in the far Southlands and establishing a new stronghold there. They then sent emissaries to Skavenblight announcing their return and their role as the Horned Rat's priesthood of decay. The Council of Thirteen had no need for a new faction with which to share their power, however. The Lords of Decay had the emissaries butchered and sent their rotting cadavers back to the Plague Lords as a lesson in humility.

In response the Plague Monks overran the Human city of Bhagrusa, seeming lashing out in anger at the nearest human city . . . but their true plan was revealed when they besieged the Skaven stronghold hidden beneath it. All communication to the distant hold ended immediately. The Council, concerned, dispatched a scouting force, and after several months they discovered what had befallen the former Human city. It was empty of all life and full of pestilent Skaven corpses, their bodies showing the ravages of terrible disease. The Plague Monks had surrounded the stronghold of Clan Merkit with great cauldrons filled with Warpstone-laced bubbling offal and putrescence, and used great bellows to fill the caves below the city with noxious mists carrying all manner of deadly diseases. Those who fled to the surface were captured and enslaved, and only Lord Merkit himself and a handful of lieutenants escaped to tell the tale.

In reponse, the Council of Thirteen sent armies of Clanrats supported by Warlock Engineers and their terrible technology. By then news of the hideous slaughter at Bhagrusa had spread, however, and many of the strongholds in the Southlands surrendered before the armies left Skavenblight. The Council's inability to deal with Clan Pestilens destabilised their authority, and many Warlord Clans splintered off from the rest of Skaven society, either waging war against each other or joining Clan Pestilens in the Southlands. After a few generations the Council lost control of the Southlands altogether, and began to lose control of the Under-Empire in its own territory.

These struggles lasted for 400 years, dividing the Skaven race between two hemispheres: the north led by the Council and the south led by the Plague Lords. Opportunistic Clans switched sides regularly, supporting one faction or another only for so long as it was advantageous. This resulted in a near constant state of warfare that ravaged the Southlands for generations, but it seemed nothing would change. The Skaven were deadlocked, each side believing themselves and their way of life to be favoured by the Horned Rat.

Everything changed, though, with the return of Clan Eshin. Trained in the arts of assassination in Cathay, their black-clad murderers could infiltrate the most well defended lairs and slay the mightiest foes without ever being discovered. Clan Eshin swore allegiance to the Council of Thirteen and immediately set about to destroy Clan Pestilens. For generations, Clan Eshin used fear and assassinations to bring the unruly Clans back under the Council's control, slowly breaking down Clan Pestilens' hold on the Southlands.

The Plague Lords realised they were losing ground, and so requested an audience with the full Council of Thirteen in Skavenblight. The Grey Seers interceded and made the Lords of Decay vow not to try to assassinate the delegates. And so Nurglitch, the mightiest Plague Lord of Clan Pestilens, travelled north to treat with the Council.

Naturally, there were several attempts to kill this great leader during the journey, but he eventually made it to Skavenblight. There he abased himself and requested acceptance into the Council, offering Clan Pestilens' resources to the Lords of Decay. As added insurance Nurglitch revealed that he and his disciples carried a strain of virulent Yellow Skull Fever and that, if they failed to reach an accord, he would be forced to release it—and therefore exterminate the entire Council and possibly a great deal of the Skaven race. The Lords of Decay welcomed Clan Pestilens back and Nurglitch, who survived trial by combat, was welcomed as a new Lord of Decay. While those hundreds of years of civil war allowed the surface races to live free of the Ratmen's attentions for a time, the ultimate price paid for them was too high: the art of the Plague Lords had been added to the Skaven arsenal.

The Glorious Death

The Skaven reputation for cowardice and dissension leads many to believe that the Skaven are either too impatient or too foolish to craft long-term plans. For the individual Ratmen, this may be true, but the weight of cultural pressures, the constant infighting and sabotage, and the slow build-up of power give the race as a whole a sense of patience and cunning. One Warlord may hatch a scheme and begin breeding the warriors to complete it; another may catch wind of the plan and begin to imitate it; and decades after the first two are long-dead, having killed one another in a spiteful battle over who should best carry out the attack, a new Warlord may pick up where they left off. So it was with their plan to re-conquer the empire of Humanity, a plan which began some 500 years before the first blow was struck—and all the while, Humanity was unaware of the danger growing beneath them.

Indeed, Humans of that time had even less awareness of the Skaven threat than they do now. They had faced only the Greenskins in the Dwarf wars, and those taciturn warriors had not seen the need to describe the Ratmen in detail. With the Orc and Goblin armies routed, there was little to fear. Lacking an enemy from without, Humanity became its own enemy. Just centuries after Sigmar's founding of that great nation, the Empire was crippled with corruption, indolence and division. Those few who remain sceptical of the Ratmen's unearthly cunning and intelligence should take note: even if they did nothing to help along this process of societal decay, they co-ordinated their centuries-long plan to strike at exactly the moment when the Empire was at its weakest. By the end of the first millennium, Emperor Goldgather was on the throne solely by his virtue of being the most corrupt lord in the realm, and his Empire had collapsed beneath him into outright civil war.

The Skaven's first moves were invisible, of course. Disease was so ubiquitous in the Old World that few could have conceived that such a thing might be a tool of war. The Black Death, so

Disease by Design

The Black Death and the Red Pox are but two of the plagues that, unknown to their sufferers, trace their origins to the Skaven. Also well known is the Boil Lurgy, which causes fluid-filled sacs to grow all over the body and causes death in 13 days. The Rot Worms are the larval form of a rat-spread parasite that lays its eggs in human flesh. The larvae hatch and literally eat their way to the surface. Estalian Fever causes the blood to slow and the patient to lose all mobility until he lacks the strength even to eat, the Vermillion Curse covers the skin in purple lines before the victim chokes on his own blood, and Saint Ehrlich's Fire makes the patient burn with fever while hallucinating of hellish torments. Only the last is typically not fatal, but many sufferers kill themselves, convinced that they are already damned by their own sins.

A Forgotten History

Although the Black Death of 1111 remains well known, the histories of the Empire have forgotten or deliberately omitted the accompanying invasion of the Skaven. They have become instead simply a plague of unusually large rats, feeding off the many dead so as to achieve fantastic populations and size. And now the deeds of Mandred Ratslayer have been softened, nearly forgotten, reducing him to a child's folk hero. Etchings often show him chasing pesky vermin from the streets with just his boots.

named for the spreading black spots it caused on the skin as the victim was consumed, was first seen in the southern areas, causing many to believe that it had been spread by Tilean tradesmen. Communication at the time was limited, and it was only when the disease decimated the streets of Nuln and Talabheim that the true extent of the epidemic became known. Then the panic began.

The disease was fast-spreading and fast-acting, killing its victims in days if not hours after the symptoms presented. No known medicine could help, and the speed of the disease provided no time to study it. The disease was soon thought to be unstoppable, with supplication to the Gods thought to be the only way to be spared. Both the low and high born suffered, and in 1115 Emperor Goldgather himself was declared a victim of the sickness (although in truth he was killed by a shuriken of a Clan Eshin assassin). By then, the Empire's population had been reduced to less than half the size of the generation before.

Then the Ratmen attacked with force of arms. They poured out of their underground warrens into every city and town in the Empire. Those few Humans spared by the plague had no time to prepare and no will to stand against the Skaven. Many viewed them as the last trumpet of the apocalypse, sent to devour whatever fragment of humanity still lived. Powered by that fear, the Skaven conquered whole cities in hours. Those too old or young to work were butchered on sight; those who could stand and hold a pick were taken to the Skaven mines as slaves. Within another year, a third of the Empire's already depleted population had been slaughtered or enslaved, and only three cities held out against the Skaven invaders: Altdorf, Talabheim and Middenheim. With no Emperor on the throne, however, the Ratmen considered themselves victorious, and there were few remaining Humans brave enough to disagree. It seemed that the end of Sigmar's Empire had indeed arrived—but once again, Fate played a hand, and two events occurred that stopped the death blow from falling.

In 1116, the Skaven marched west to claim the last remaining territories of the Empire, but as they entered Sylvania they encountered an enemy they could not so easily defeat—and a new horror marched forth upon this world. Five years earlier, just when the plague had begun, a meteorite had been seen to fall upon the state of Sylvania. As with the stone that later fell on the town of Mordheim, it is now clear this meteorite was composed partly or wholly from Warpstone. In the chaos of the plague years, none had set forth to see what damage this had wrought, but when the Skaven forces entered Sylvania's borders, there was an army there ready to meet them: an army of the dead.

Facing a foe immune to both disease and fear, and almost as numerous as themselves, the Skaven found themselves without any of their traditional tactical advantages. The small force that had been sent into Sylvania was quickly eliminated by the Undead horde and their necromantic general van Hel. The Skaven responded as only they knew how: sending waves and waves of more troops into that province to crush this new enemy. The war between these two abominable races endured for almost five years, and no side ever claimed victory. The struggle did however divert the great armies of the Ratmen away from the remainder of the empire, as well as exhaust their troops (and, equally propitious for the Empire, the troops of the Undead armies as well). Finally, the Empire had a chance to strike back against their conquerors, but the damage wrought upon them had been so complete that there was no one brave enough to believe such an action could succeed, let alone convince other men to follow him in it.

Except for one.

When the plague struck, Elector Count Mandred von Grotkaas, ruler of Middenheim, ordered that city's great stone viaducts to be destroyed to prevent the infection entering the walls. This decisive action spared the city most of the horrors of the disease, and its army remained strong. When the Ratmen attacked, they recognised Middenheim as the last bastion of Imperial strength, and laid siege to the city, while their sapper agents worked their way up through the tunnels in the mountain beneath. But Mandred did not falter against these terrible odds. He ordered the lower levels of the city to be

flooded, and his great courage and personal leadership inspired his men to fight furiously and ceaselessly against the Ratmen's constant attacks. The city held out for months, and when the battle in Sylvania began, much of the Ratmen's forces collapsed into internal strife or withdrew.

Aware that this may be his only chance to stop the hideous tide of the Ratmen, Mandred gathered what remained of the city's soldiers and templars and rode out into the Skaven armies, breaking the siege and routing the Ratmen. After years of facing cowed and out-numbered opponents, the Skaven were unprepared and unwilling to face an onslaught of armoured knights. Pressing every advantage he had, Mandred's army rode south to Altdorf and relieved that city as well. His army grew, and he launched it on a great crusade against all the Ratmen in the empire. Over the next five years, the Skaven were gradually divided upon themselves, and driven back underground. It was a defeat, but for the Skaven only a temporary one. For now they knew their enemy intimately, his lands and forces, his strengths and weaknesses, and it was only a matter of time before they tried again.

The Spreading Shadow

It was almost seven hundred years later, but the Skaven did strike again with equal force and fury, but this time against Bretonnia. Here the disease of choice became known as the Red Pox, for the bloody welts that appeared on the victim's face and throat. The Pox was slower to kill than the Black Death, making it slightly easier to contain, but greatly extending the suffering of its victims. It first appeared in Bordelaux, then some years later in Brionne, before spreading east along the Brienne river, and south into Tilea. Once again, the Skaven waited until the entire southern region was ravaged by disease and depopulation, then attacked. They sacked Brienne and Miragliano, and lay siege to Quenelles. However, the lords of northern Bretonnia were not slow to retaliate, and with the aid of the elves of Athel Loren, soon drove the Skaven back underground yet again.

During this millennium, humanity explored the world, and discovered that no place was safe from the depredations of the Ratmen. When Marco Colombo reached Lustria, he found the Skaven already poised to slaughter his men, and when Tilean sailors reached the shores of Cathay, they found the Skaven lurking in the darkness there. Finally, mankind became aware of the true extent of the Skaven Under-Empire, and the true magnitude of the Skaven population.

Again, it is easy to under-estimate the Skaven; to picture the Under-Empire as nothing but rough-cut, earth-filled barrows, around their larger settlements. A comforting thought, but a staggeringly incorrect one. The Skaven tunnels are vast in height, solid in construction and inconceivably far-ranging. By the turn of the second millennium the Skaven had constructed networks under every town and city in the Empire, and all of them lead back to their capital, the twisted and evil tower of Skavenblight, which has mines running as deep as the tower stretches above.

Their networks cannot cross the huge expanse of the Great Western Ocean to Lustria or Naggaroth, but that is their one

and only limitation. The Great Maze, as they call it, soon provided continuous unbroken travel from the Chaos Steppes beyond Norsca and Kislev, under the Sea of Claws to Albion, through the Empire and Bretonnia to Tilea and Estalia, and ever-southward, to Araby, the Southlands, and beyond. Neither the World's Edge Mountains nor the Giant Kingdoms delay a Skaven force from travelling to distant Cathay and the islands beyond it. Although the way is long and often narrow, there are no mountains, swamps or forests in the dark below, no snowfalls or storms, and very few beasts that have not learnt to fear the rodent masters of the dark. So it is that a Skaven army can now travel from Nippon to Bretonnia—halfway around the world—in less than six months. And the Skaven may move even faster soon, for Clan Skryre have perfected their Warpstone-fuelled "warprail engines" and await only the completion of the tracks for the carts to run on before they can place these machines throughout all of the Under-Empire.

Despite their size, these tunnels still do not contain sufficient living space for the constantly breeding Skaven horde, however, so the Skaven continue to struggle to conquer the surface, and to find more places to hide beneath it. Also feeding their need for conquest is their unquenchable lust for Warpstone. Whenever the Great Maze is not being used to house or transport Skaven troops, it shelters the mining, processing and transportation of that all-precious mineral.

Warpstone deposits have been found all over the Old World, with the biggest finds located under Karak Eight-Peaks, under the hills of Albion and most famously, under the city of Mordheim. In the year 1999, a huge meteorite composed entirely of Warpstone descended on that city, reducing it in a moment to little more than ash and molten rock, and

creating the largest concentrated source of that foul material ever known in the Old World. Almost as instantly, the Skaven appeared in the craterous ruins, keen to claim the city's new treasure. But the impact had been seen far and wide, and soon word of what lay in the ruins reached the ears of Wizards, Chaos worshippers and countless other seekers of the stone.

As they were unaffected by the Chaos taint of the stone, the Skaven naturally grabbed the lion's share of the mineral, but more important was the knowledge they gained from that event: that men would pay dearly for even the tiniest amount of Warpstone, and that other men could be paid a trifle to seek vast quantities of the stone for them. The Skaven discovered that, linked by a common desire, humanity could be enslaved by bargains just as well as by chains. From that point hence, the Chaos Bargain spread like wildfire through the Empire, and great was the suffering it brought.

City of the Damned

With the end of the millennium approaching, many believed that Sigmar would come again to reclaim his empire. Following an ancient prophecy of Macadamnus the Hermit that Sigmar would return to the "city of his sisters", tens of thousands of pilgrims journeyed to Mordheim, home of the convent of the Merciful Sisters of Sigmar. As the numbers increased and their fears grew, however, Mordheim's reputation as a city of vice took hold, and many pilgrims threw off their holy ways in favour of licentiousness and depravity. Thus, many scholars conclude, Sigmar did return to judge his empire, and cleansed it with holy fire from above. Others state Mordheim was already a city of the damned, and its powers caused false followers to be drawn to it, and eventually, called down the Chaos stone itself.

Present Threats

In the 500 years since the fall of Mordheim, the Skaven have returned to the surface of the Old World in large numbers twice more. Both were during dark times of Chaos incursions. As such, these events are typically forgotten in the greater histories, which, of course, suit the Ratmen's strategy perfectly.

In 2302 Magnus the Pious, like Mandred Ratslayer before him, rallied a divided and corrupt Empire to make a stand against the Chaos incursion that was sweeping down from the north. He allied himself with the Tsar of the Kislevites, and together their armies stood firm as the churning seas of Chaos smashed upon the city of Kislev—and then withdrew. The brave troops who survived were marching home in victory when Skaven skirmishers attacked their lines, turning that victory march into a desperate retreat to the safety of the central cities. The armies of the Empire were reduced to a remnant again, yet no further attacks came. It is unknown what twist of Fate, if any, prevented the Skaven from pressing their advantage.

Two centuries later, the forces of Chaos rose again, and the Storm of Chaos broke over Middenheim. As Archaon led his armies into the Empire, the Skaven were present in their usual ravenous hordes, picking the bones and feasting on the wounded. During the siege of Middenheim, their sappers destroyed much of the battlements and caused further damage behind the lines. Valten, the greatest hero of the Empire, was assassinated by Deathmaster Snikch as he lay wounded in his tent. Yet only a small fraction of the Skaven military force was seen throughout the Storm, and never once did they press their advantage as they had before.

Perhaps their true actions were lost in the sheer volume of that immense struggle. Or perhaps they were dealing with other enemies, far beyond the borders of the Empire. The third possibility is far more terrifying: that they have been waiting, as they had before, until the aftermath of the battle before they strike. Although the Storm has subsided, the Empire remains torn to tatters, its troops scattered and exhausted, its people confused and afraid. Disease and pestilence are rising stronger than ever from the charnel pits that were the battlefields, and famine stalks the land like a hungry wolf.

The Empire is once again ripe for the taking, and where it is weak, the Skaven are strong. Their tunnels still lie beneath every city, their clawed hands slink in the shadows behind countless Human undertakings, their twisted minds ever waiting and planning, seeking ultimate revenge against the upstart manlings. The Storm of Chaos may have subsided, but a new tempest is set to break upon Humanity at any moment. When it does, Skaven history will be changed forever, and Human history may forever cease.

A Timeline of Skaven History

c. –2000 The ancient city that would become known as Skavenblight is first occupied by men. It grows rapidly to become the most densely populated Human city in the Old World.

–1950 A wandering Dwarf clan from the Black Mountains establishes trade with the city and eventually settles there. The city grows even faster with their help and many advances in architecture and engineering are achieved.

–1880 The Humans, with the help of the Dwarfs, begin work on their great temple. Work continues for a century.

–1780 The temple is completed, but Warpstone rains down on the city. Within a year, the city is overrun by swarms of giant mutated rats and disappears from history.

c. –1600 The first true Skaven emerge as masters of Skavenblight. In search of more Warpstone, they look beyond their city. Skaven begin experimenting with magic. They expand their tunnel system to accommodate their rapidly expanding population.

c. –1500 Just as the High Elves withdraw from the Old World back to Ulthuan after the disastrous War of the Beard, the Dwarf Empire in the World's Edge Mountains is devastated by a series of volcanic eruptions and earthquakes triggered by Skaven sorcery. Skavenblight's population is devastated. In the wake of this destruction, the 12 Grey Lords arise, forming the first Council of Thirteen and the Order of Grey Seers. Dwarf records indicate that this era marked the beginning of Skaven incursions into Karak Varn. The Skaven support the Greenskins against the Dwarfs in the destruction of Karak Ungor. This marks the beginning of the Goblin Wars.

c. –1400 The wandering Clans establish the first Skaven strongholds in the areas later known as the Southlands, Araby, and the Dark Lands. Lord Malkrit leads Clan Moulder into what will become known as Hell Pit in the Troll Country of Kislev. Lord Viskrin instructs Clan Eshin to establish its stronghold in far Cathay.

c. –1300 to c. –1250 The War of Cripple Peak is fought with the legions of Nashash.

c. –1200 In exchange for Warpstone minded below Cripple Peak, Skaven temporarily join forces with Nagash's Undead legions to lure several tribes of Orcs and Goblins into the Cursed Pit. Nagash summons a massive army of Undead and the Council of Thirteen has him assassinated.

Skaven break through to the lower levels of Karak Eight Peaks, which falls to the combined forces of Orcs, Goblins, and Skaven. Once the Dwarfs are driven out, the Skaven keep fighting against the Goblins for possession of the upper levels.

c. –1200 to –420 Dwarf soldiers discover gunpowder on a Skaven corpse, proving that the Ratmen have begun using the Dwarfs' own weapons against them.

c. –400 Establishment of the Skaven Under-Empire and the first great tunnel networks beneath the Old World. Human tribes settle across the Old World.

c. –380 Dwarf cannon are first used in battle, helping to prevent the Greenskin and Skaven armies from taking Karaz-a-Karak. Skaven spies steal the designs for the cannons and begin building warp-pistols and jezzails. Clan Skryre rises to power with these devices.

c. –350 Skaven overrun Crookback Mountain in the Dark Lands and enslave several tribes of Night Goblins living there.

c. –300 to 200 Skaven of Clan Pestilens return from Lustria, and a great civil war erupts in the Empire. Without support from the Skaven, the Greenskin armies weaken and the Dwarfs begin to turn the Goblin tide back.

c. –100 Nagash returns to Cripple Peak and destroys Clan Rikek.

-15 Dwarf King Kurgan Ironbeard is captured by Skaven of Clan Eshin in the Grey Mountains. He is then sold to Orcs for many pieces of Warpstone; he is later rescued from the Orcs by Sigmar, a Human chieftain.

-1 Battle of Black Fire Pass.

0 Sigmar's Empire founded in Altdorf.

17 Sigmar destroys a Skaven horde in the Middle Mountains of the Empire.

c. 100 Assassin-adepts of Clan Eshin return from Cathay to serve the Council of Thirteen. Many Clans are quickly brought to heel by the assassination of their Warlords.

c. 200 After enslaving or destroying several other clans, devastating the Southlands with magical plagues and killing one of the Lords of Decay in ritual combat, Nurglitch, Plague Lord of Clan Pestilens, gains a place on the Council of Thirteen.

c. 700 Warlocks of Clan Skryre perfect the warpfire thrower. Reports of these terrifying weapons are discounted as tales of madmen.

1110 Lord Vilner, heir to the Drakwald throne, is assassinated by Deathmaster Slike, sparking civil war in the Empire.

1111 Clan Pestilens unleashes the Black Plague. Over the next four years, more than half of the Empire's population is wiped out. Massive Skaven incursions erupt across the land, looting and razing towns and villages.

1115 Skaven start to systematically enslave the surviving Human settlements in the Empire. Emperor Goldgather is assassinated by Deathmaster Slike. When no successor is named, the Skaven declare themselves rulers of the Empire.

1116 The Skaven march into Sylvania. Necromancer van Hel raises a massive Undead army to turn back the Skaven advance. The two forces fight to a standstill for the next five years.

1122 Count Mandred Ratslayer breaks the siege of Middenheim, then rallies support from the Elector Counts and leads a crusade against the Skaven.

1124 The Empire finally drives the Skaven below ground. Mandred is crowned Emperor.

1152 The Council of Thirteen orders the assassination of Emperor Mandred Ratslayer. Nartik of Clan Eshin murders him later the same year.

1247 Tilean explorer Marco Polare reaches Cathay, and writes of spying the Skaven under the great city of Wei-jin.

c. 1300 Clan Moulder create the first successful Rat Ogre, and begin their rise in prominence amongst the other Clans.

c. 1430 Sultan Jaffar, a powerful Arabyan sorcerer, welds a coalition of several desert tribes and expands his city state to a small empire with the capture of Al-Haikk, Copher, Martek, and Lashiek. Legends speak of him summoning Daemons and conversing with spirits. The Skaven in Araby secretly ally with Sultan Jaffar, spying for him and murdering his rivals in exchange for Warpstone.

1448 The Skaven convince Jaffar that Estalia intends to attack Araby. The Sultan invades Estalia and captures Magritta. This sets in motion the Araby crusades that eventually drive the Sultan's armies back to Araby and shatter the Sultanate at the Battle of Al-Haikk.

1492 Marco Colombo discovers Lustria, and reports sighting many Skaven in the jungles, still fighting their Lizardmen enemies.

1563 Skaven overrun the city of Tobaro in Tilea, forcing its ruler, Prince Marcelli, to evacuate.

1565 Marcelli returns two years later with reputedly the largest mercenary force ever

assembled. With the help of the high elves, he reclaims his home.

1601 The village of Escantos in Southern Tilea is completely devoured by swarms of rats.

1666 Clan Skryre warlocks develop a reliable (by Skaven standards) warpfire cannon. Its terrifying payload can wipe out entire armies.

1707 Skaven forces aid Orc Warlord Gorbad Ironclaw in his attack against the Empire. Skaven forces cripple Nuln from the inside, allowing Ironclaw to take control of that city without any significant losses. The Skaven are repaid handsomely with Warpstone.

1786 Clan Eshin releases rats infected with the Red Pox in the town of Bordelaux in Bretonnia. The city loses over a third of its population to the Red Pox in a single week. The Baron Giscard Du'ponte orders the poor quarter to be burned to the ground in a fit of desperation. The pox is halted immediately.

1812 Southern Bretonnia and northern Tilea are ravaged by another outbreak of the Red Pox. Panic, anarchy and rioting spread through several Bretonnian cities as mobs rampage in the cities, burning anything that might carry the pox, including sheep, dogs, frogs and fish. In Brionne, the resulting Great Fire of Brionne razes three-quarters of the city. Again with the disease at its peak, the Skaven attack. Brionne, Bordelaux and Miragliano are all but destroyed by disease and invasion; the Ratmen then lay siege to Quenelles.

1813 Duc de Parravon convinces the Elves of Athel Loren that the Skaven will turn on them next, and an alliance is struck. The combined forces of the Duc and the Elves break the siege at Quenelles and drive the Skaven underground once more. Over a third of the Bretonnian population lie dead from the plague and the invasion.

1941 Warlord Skinchewer of Clan Skab allies himself with one of the Tomb Kings. Acquiring new and dark magic from this arrangement, Clan Skab rises in power amongst the clans, although it is still far below the four Greater Clans.

1999 The city of Mordheim is hit by a meteorite composed entirely of Warpstone, providing the largest concentrated source of that foul material ever known. Skaven immediately take possession of the town, and begin mining the stone.

c. 2000 Clan Scruten is led away from the main Skaven areas by Grey Seer Kritislik. The Clan establishes a stronghold hidden in the Cursed Marshes and extending beneath Marienburg.

2084 Clan Skryre warlocks perfect the Farsqueaker, allowing instantaneous communication between warrens any distance apart.

2111 Lawful citizens of Rötebach discover that the Count of Middenland, Luitprand II, has made the Chaos Bargain. Luitprand has the entire town hanged to cover his tracks.

2207 Another, smaller, Warpstone meteorite crashes to the ground, this time in the Barren Hills. Skaven crews carry much of it away but not all: a Human Wizard manages to grab one piece. He transports it in secret to Castle Wittgenstein.

2250 Small skirmishes between the Skaven and the Tomb Kings of Khemri turn into outright war. The war lasts for some two centuries and provides cover for the Skaven to greatly expand their tunnel network to the Southlands.

2302 Magnus the Pious leads the Empire in holding back the forces of Chaos at the gates of Kislev. The rising tide of dark magic prompts the Grey Seers to step in and call upon the Horned Rat for divine judgement to stop the warring between their clans. In a massive ceremony at Skavenblight during Vermintide, the great annual feast of the Horned God, the Grey Seers succeed in summoning an incarnation of the Horned Rat. The Clan Lords are terrified into a level of obedience and cooperation previously unthinkable as the Horned One dictates the plan they are to follow. The Council of Thirteen is completely reorganised and all hostilities between Skaven are ended immediately.

2303 During the Great War Against Chaos, the Skaven fight the Chaos armies as well as the armies of the Empire and Kislev, but after several hundred years of internecine warfare, the Skaven's numbers are almost exhausted. The Chaos hordes are eventually defeated by Magnus the Pious at Kislev. The Skaven ambush several contingents of the Empire army as it returns home, and soon afterwards minor plagues erupt in Nuln, Talabheim, and Marienburg.

2320 Skaven agents in Marienberg burn half the ships in that harbour to the waterline with firepots. The motive for this attack is never discovered.

2321 During the winter, Clan Eshin Gutter Runners make a number of raids on Imperial, Bretonnian, Tilean and Estalian warfleets at anchor in their respective ports. The Gutter Runners use firepots and naptha to burn the fleets with varying levels of success.

2377 The Monkey King seizes power in Cathay. He installs Warlord Kishkik of Clan Eshin as an advisor, and begins trade with the Skaven Empire.

2387 Skaven sappers undermine the walls of Castle Siegfried in Sylvania. When Prince Karsten of Waldenhof fails to pay them for this service, they carry away every child in town.

2399 Skaven of Clan Skryre begin developing warpfire-powered underground locomotives ("warprails"). Originally used to move mining carts, they are soon adapted for troop transport as well.

2485 Clan Mors devastates several rival clans (including much of Clan Skab) and begins to rise in power and status.

2491 Bagrian, master of the monastery of La Maisontaal in Bretonnia, infiltrates Skavenblight and steals the awesome Black Arc. The Grey Seer Gnawdoom and his Skaven, along with allies in the form of the Undead army of the Lichemaster Heinrich Kemler, move against the monastery and recover the Arc after a vicious battle with the monks.

2512 Skaven sappers completely destroy Castle Wittgenstein and retrieve the Warpstone stored there.

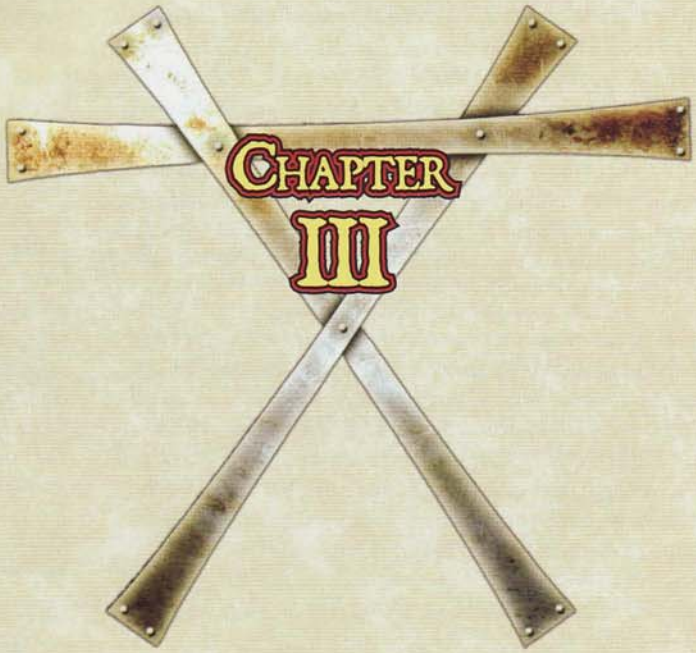
2514 Fritz von Halstadt, Chief Magistrate of Nuln and head of the Countess Emmanuelle's secret police, is discovered trading Warpstone to the Skaven in the sewers beneath Nuln. Grey Seer Thanquol has been feeding real information, half truths, and outright lies to the insane von Halstadt, manipulating him with the ultimate aim of starting a civil war in the Empire. The plot is exposed and von Halstadt is killed, but Thanquol escapes. Later the same year Thanquol returns, seeking vengeance with a Skaven horde. Using Nuln's extensive sewer network to infiltrate the city, they almost overrun it in a single night, halted only by fires lit by the defenders, which then rage through the city. Eventually the Skaven are driven back, leaving half of Nuln in ruins. Grey Seer Thanquol swears he will have vengeance upon Nuln and its inhabitants before returning to Skavenblight to face the inquisition of the Lords of Decay.

2520 The Storm of Chaos begins. Archaon leads his Daemonic horde into the Empire. Skaven armies join in the slaughter of their enemies.

2521 Siege of Middenheim. Skaven sappers destroy much of the east side of the city, but the city still holds. Deathmaster Snikch assassinates Valten in the aftermath.

2522 Current Day

Skaven Society



"You suck your thumb and your teeth will stick out! And if you don't stop, you'll grow whiskers and a snout, too! Where do you think Skaven come from, hmm? They're all little boys who sucked their thumbs!"

—Frau Wilchers of Unterbaum

Though it appears to be outwardly simple and brutal, Skaven society is more complex than it seems. It is fraught with plots and intrigues, riddled with treachery, and burdened with a deep-seated hatred for the world of man. Everything the Skaven do is to advance their positions, either as individuals or as a civilisation. This chapter takes a closer look at the wheels of Skaven society, examining everything from temperament and psychology of the individual Ratman to the goals and motivations of the Great and Lesser Skaven Clans. Customs, language, and religion are also discussed in depth, as are the Skaven's views on the other races that call the Old World their home.

— Skaven Temperament —

Skaven represent many things that the typical Sigmar-fearing citizen of the Empire would despise. They are selfish creatures, raised in a turbulent society espousing survival above all other things. The methods Skaven use to survive are restricted only by the severity of their consequences, and even these repercussions are overlooked in the face of extreme danger. "Better him than I," is a heart-felt Skaven vow, enriched by millennia of active observance by the foul, rat-like species.

Life and individual freedom are next to worthless in Skaven society. Survival is paramount to the individual, and the weak are rarely suffered to live unless they provide some tangible benefit to their superiors. While life is cheap to the Skaven, each one still struggles to survive against all odds. A cornered Skaven gladly fights to the last of his kind—so long as *he* is the last of his kind. His relationships with his birthkin are fleeting at best, and last only so long as his siblings and cousins are of use to him.

Despite the individual Skaven's thirst for survival and advancement within his society, individual Skaven can also be driven to a ferocity unmatched by any of the other races. When food is scarce and space in their under-empire is at a premium, the Skaven have been known to stare death in the face with nary a flinch, especially when they are part of a larger group. Whether this is because they are motivated by hunger alone, or are driven by some uncontrolled group instinct or enraging scent, or are forced to act out of fear of their leaders' reprisals, none can say. It is likely to be a combination of all of the above.

"A tale is told of two Skaven, birthkin from the same breeder. While scouting the woods above their home, they encountered a ravenous Minotaur. Wisely, they fled the beast, but it gave chase and pursued them for many miles.

"'Surely,' said the first Skaven, panting, 'we cannot cannot cannot outrun this horrible creature.'

"The second chittered his agreement. 'Nor do we have to,' he replied.

"Unsure of his birthkin's motive, the first Skaven asked, 'What do you mean?'"

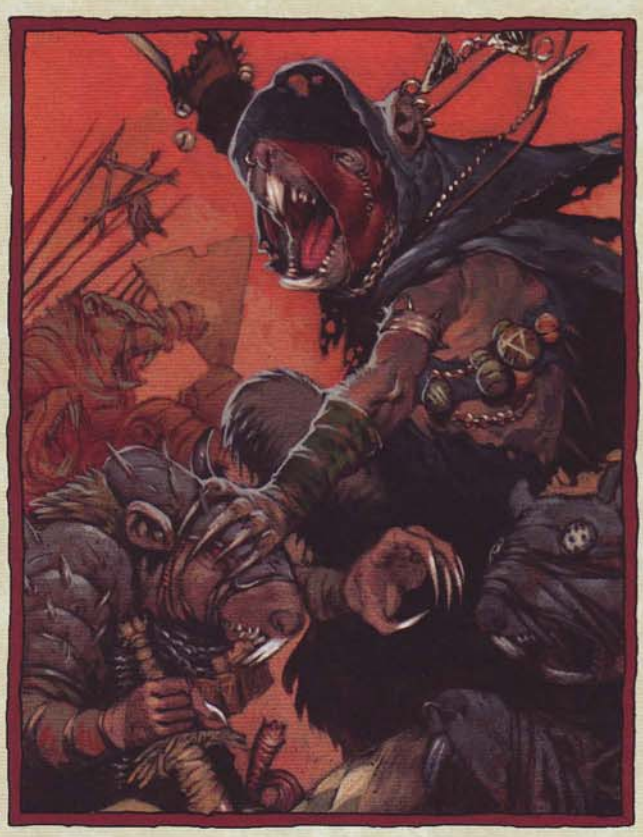
"By way of response, the second Skaven tripped his companion, answering, 'I I I only need to outrun you!'"

—A fable from the Lessons of the Horned Rat

Though they rarely admit it, the Skaven view all clanmates as potential enemies. Skaven who occupy positions of authority are envied for their power, while those Ratmen who serve in lesser roles are constantly suspected of sedition. A Skaven's empathy is limited to understanding the covetous feelings of his peers. Much of his suspicion is projected upon the Ratmen around him, whether or not the allegations are founded in any kind of fact. Skaven motivations are never pure, and even the simplest of actions on the part of one individual can cause ripples of suspicion that ultimately affect anyone who comes into contact with him.

The Skaven never accept blame for their failures, preferring instead to implicate others, thereby transferring culpability onto their competitors. The truthfulness of these accusations is irrelevant to the accuser, the accused, and the superior who must judge them; all that matters to any of the involved parties is the strength of the case. The blame game has always been a popular pastime amongst the Ratmen, and Skaven who are unable to successfully shift blame from themselves onto others rarely live for very long. Interestingly, this habit has grown from one of mere survival and of trickery, after centuries of breeding, into one of actual belief. Almost all Skaven seem to be psychologically predisposed to believe that their own failures *must* be the result of a subordinate's incompetence, sabotage by a jealous rival, or the poor planning of a superior. The concept of failure based on one's own merit (or lack thereof) is simply impossible for them to imagine.

Skaven leaders, meanwhile, support this intrigue because they love to make examples of their subordinates. Better yet, they enjoy singling out the subordinates of their rivals even more. Such actions taken against other Skaven are not only considered to be entertaining, but are also seen as a natural way of culling the weak. Skaven leaders who entertain themselves by debasing or punishing a rival's servants must take care not to inconvenience their peers or superiors overmuch. Those that do so risk becoming examples themselves.



A Skaven's single most driving goal beyond simple survival is to rise in status above his peers. Indeed, the Skaven mentality is that this rise in status is a means to the end: the higher one's status, the longer one is likely to survive. Yet with each rise in position, there is always another level of superiority, another rank of superiors to envy, and of course each increase in power only means that there are that many more lesser Skaven to covet the successful Ratman's position. In other words, the more powerful you become, the more enemies you earn. Even the canniest of Skaven never see peace in their lifetimes, and to die from natural causes is unheard of.

Skaven Personality

By and large, individual Skaven are petty, jealous, devious, and sly. They are always looking for an angle to play in order to advance themselves within the great scheme of things. Though they are constantly seeking inroads to power and excess, they are rarely possessed of the ability to plan things in the long term. This is, in part, due to their naturally short life spans. A Skaven who develops a talent for mapping the actions and reactions of his foes over the course of many weeks, months, or years is surely destined to become a powerful member of his species.

The Skaven who lead their people seek to take all the credit for success, while at the same time letting their subordinates do all the work and take all the risks. Even minor victories are touted, exaggerated, and made to appear larger than life. Many Skaven reputations have been made or broken on such tall tales, yet it is commonly accepted as a leader's due to call attention to his victories.

By comparison, lesser Skaven seek to gain some measure of glory without making themselves too much of a nuisance to their masters as a result. Calling attention to oneself is a double-edged sword. In one instance, it allows for a Skaven's actions to be suitably rewarded. On the other hand, it makes the individual Skaven a target for jealous rivals who might not have noticed him otherwise. In the long run, rank and file Skaven constantly dream of gaining the power of their betters at the expense of everyone else around them.

Of all motivating factors in a Skaven's life, then, fear is perhaps the strongest. The only things a Skaven has, his life and his status, can be taken in an instant, and the fear of the loss of either is a constant spectre. Punishment and condemnation lead to the loss of one or the other or both, so fear of them, too, is a constant. To sacrifice even minimal advancement or lose one's position to a rival is a heavy blow to a Skaven's ego, and for his peers to know of it just as bad. Losing rank is terrible, and dying is a horror not to be considered, but to endure the chittering laughter of one's peers preparatory to either? Pure hell. Thus, second only to fear as a common Skaven emotion is that of spite.

The Enemy Within

Within the Under-Empire, inter-clan warfare is a daily occurrence. Far from being a rarity amongst the Skaven, it is less common to find the Ratmen at peace with one another for any appreciable length of time. The weakest clans serve as targets for the strongest, which are constantly on the look-out for vulnerabilities to exploit. Sometimes, several clans compete with one another in order to determine who will have the chance to pick at the proverbial bones of a lesser clan that is only hours from its own destruction. Clans that fall beneath the swords and claws of their fellow Skaven are integrated into the victor's clan as expendable slaves. After all, a slave must be alive to be of value, and continued survival, even in a state of bondage, is always preferable to a Skaven than death.

As such, the lesser clans are always jockeying with one another in order to avoid being on the receiving end of this inevitable slaughter. In the land of the blind, even the one-eyed rat is king; such is the logic that divides the lesser clans, and this has fuelled their petty squabbles for millennia. Were the lesser clans able to unite, even for a short period of time, they might be capable of forming a powerful bloc within Skaven society. Such an event is hardly likely, given Skaven sensibilities, and so the nightly contest continues unabated.

Skaven and Other Races

Beyond the Skaven's self-destructive and predatory impulses toward their own kind, there lies the surface world. The average Skaven knows little about the folk who walk the ground that roofs their warrens, but he hates them nonetheless. Men, Dwarfs, Elves, and any of the other terrestrial races are seen as competitors for the Skaven's birthright, mere obstacles to world domination. To rule the world, it must first be cleansed of these lesser races in order to make room for the Skaven hordes.

Dwarfs

Dwarfs, being a subterranean race, have had the most intimate relationship with the Skaven and their methods of warfare. Nearly 1,500 years prior to the founding of the Empire, during a period the Dwarfs call the Time of Woes, their struggles against the Skaven were at their most intense. The memory of the Dwarfs is indeed long, and their enmity for the Skaven is second only to their hatred for the Greenskin races.

Because of the bitter conflicts that have arisen between Dwarfs and Skaven, the Dwarfs are perhaps the best prepared to deal with the Ratmen on their own terms. In the earliest days of these conflicts, the Skaven found the Dwarfs to be easily defeated. This was as much due to the Dwarfs' inexperience with the Skaven as it was to the fact that the Dwarfs were without allies and beset by enemies on all fronts. A number of Dwarf holds, as well as countless outposts and settlements, were lost during the Time of Woes, and many Dwarf lines were exterminated as they fought to the last to defend their ancient halls.

In modern times, the Skaven view Dwarfs with a mixture of fear and contempt. They recognize that Dwarfs are great warriors, but they also see that the Dwarf race is caught in a downward spiral from which it is unlikely to ever recover. Given the opportunity, the Skaven clans cause the Dwarfs ever more harm, but this is hardly a priority now that many of the ancient Dwarf holds are already under Skaven control.

Elves

The forests of the Elves are all but avoided by the Skaven. Though they loathe admitting it, the Ratmen are fearful of the Elves and their ways. Of the other races, only the Elves can rival the Skaven's penchant for speed and stealth, and their wizardries are powerful indeed. For these reasons, the Skaven avoid open warfare with the Elves, preferring to save the worst for last.

Of the conflicts between Elf and Skaven, perhaps the most well-known is the Battle of Remarché in 1813 IC. As the Skaven attempted to besiege several Bretonnian cities, namely Quenelles and Brionne, their forces were routed by a large force that included the Elves of Athel Loren. The Elves had come to honour the treaties they cultivated with the Human kingdoms of Bretonnia, and they fought well against the insatiable Skaven menace.

The defeat at Remarché has lingered long in the Skaven memory, more so than any of their other losses. Even though the battle itself was a minor footnote in an ever growing list of campaigns and skirmishes, it remains a sore point to Skaven historians and warlords alike. The Skaven continue to harass the Elves when convenient opportunities present themselves, but they have had little luck infiltrating Elf cities and settlements.

Halflings

The Halflings are no threat to the Skaven or their plans to conquer the world. During the Great Plague of 1111, the Skaven enjoyed free reign over the newly-incorporated lands of the Moot. In response, the Halflings hid behind closed doors, fighting only when circumstances forced them to do so. These first forays into the Halfling lands produced little tangible benefit to the Skaven, however, and so such campaigns in the modern age are rare.

The Skaven believe Halflings are too weak to wage war effectively. They make horrible slaves, especially given their lack of physical strength and their high food requirements. To most Skaven Halflings are no better than livestock, offering little of value except for their meat, which the Ratmen find tender but fatty and somewhat less than filling.

Humans

With the spread of Humanity to nearly every corner of the world, from fabled Cathay to the jungles of Lustria, Humans stand as the greatest obstacle to the Skaven's plans to achieve world domination. Naturally, Dwarfs are formidable opponents, but they are fast becoming too few to resist the hordes of Ratmen that stalk the tunnels of the Under-Empire. And as the Elven population diminishes, withdrawing more and more into the safety of their distant homelands, the Skaven

would be free to act with impunity if it weren't for the hated manlings. This said, however, Humans are easy to corrupt, quick to betray their own race for a few more pieces of filthy lucre. And so, the Skaven's greatest enemy in their expansion into the surface is also their greatest ally.

Coupled with their duplicitous tendencies, Humans are often naïve and ignorant, wilfully ignoring all evidence of danger until it's too late. The widespread denial of the Skaven race ensures that the sinister Ratmen will one day triumph over the hairless chattel that concerns itself with such minor things like prices, trade, and other nonsense. Those few who do turn to the shadows, who look into the dank recesses of shadowy alleys and sewers to hunt the truth, are branded madmen or heretics by their countrymen, and are watched or even imprisoned by their betters. Too many inquisitive men and women have vanished or turned up dead after a few days of persistent questioning.

Imperial attitudes are a prime example of the insidiousness of the Skaven. There are few organizations in the Empire who aren't host to one or more Skaven spies or agents. This malign influence spreads from the highest positions of Imperial power to the most prestigious institutions of learning and knowledge, gnawing at the Empire's heart from the inside out. So long as tales of the loathsome Ratmen are held as works of fantasy, these Skaven corruptors can operate freely, albeit from the shadows.

Not all Humans are blind to the Skaven menace. A few openly fight the Ratmen, opposing them at every turn. Nowhere is this more true than in Tilea, for these people's history is one tied to the Skaven's. Tileans recognize the Skaven as a true and very real danger to their civilisation, and fight to keep the Skaven host at bay. Thanks to their vigilance, they have kept and continue to keep the Skaven under control.

Other Races

The Skaven don't discriminate when it comes to dispensing hatred. All races are either tools or rivals, diminishing resources that the Skaven desperately need. Of the other races, the Skaven maintain tenuous alliances with the Greenskins, though such contracts are rarely long-lived and the Greenskins always suffer for their gullibility when it comes to Skaven friendship.

Clan Moulder is particularly interested in the larger races, especially Ogres, Trolls, and Giants. This interest is purely academic on the part of the Master Moulders, who take the power and strength inherent in these burly creatures and bend it to their own uses. It is from such experiments that Rat Ogres were created.

Although they are a race born of Chaos, the Skaven feel little kinship with Beastmen, Mutants, or Daemons. They occasionally ally with such forces, especially when it is convenient to do so, but the Ratmen do not presume such coalitions are worth sustaining overlong. They see too clearly the motives of their chaotic cousins, and their place in a world ruled by the Ruinous Powers would certainly be no more glamorous than it is today.

— Skaven Life —

While the daily life of the Skaven is driven by a constant quest for survival, there are many distinctive elements that set them apart from the other races of the Old World. Language, religion, and behaviour serve as examples of what make the Skaven truly unique.

Language

The language of the Skaven, Queekish, is a chittering and hasty speech. Skaven dialogue is often littered with a hodgepodge of rapid squeaks and trills. Queekish words are short, clipped, and often repeated several times in a row in an effort to add emphasis to statements. Due to the speed with which Queekish is spoken, long sentences are often broken up into several fragments. As such, these fragmentary sentences must be pieced together to form coherent thoughts, especially during long stretches of dialogue.

The written form of Queekish consists of several thousand pictograms, each representing a single word or concept. Most Skaven know the most important pictograms, while only a few can recite them all. As new discoveries are made, new pictograms are devised. Many are so similar as to be indistinguishable to the untrained eye. Writing is accomplished by the use of a sharpened stylus or an extended claw. Many

Skaven records were kept on wax or clay tablets, but the use of ink on parchment has become increasingly popular with the Grey Seers and Master Moulders.

The Skaven are able linguists and many learn the languages of the Old World so they may better deal with their slaves and enemies. Though they see other languages as inherently inferior to their own, they find they are valuable tools in the advancement of their cause. Their linguistic habits of repetition and quickly-spoken words carry over to the other tongues that they learn. A Skaven's voice is often high-pitched, squeaky, and displays a somewhat whiny character.

Scent also plays a strong a role in Skaven communication. The Skaven exude several different musks, depending on their emotional state. Though secretion of these musks is largely involuntary, many Skaven learn to hide their emotions from their companions by will alone. Only a handful of surface dwellers are able to distinguish between different Skaven musks. To the majority of non-Skaven, the Ratmen stink of urine and wet fur.

The most common Skaven musk is referred to as the Musk of Fear. Unsurprisingly, the Musk of Fear is secreted when a Skaven is frightened. Though most Skaven are in a near-constant state of anxiety, they only exude in truly terrifying circumstances. This, of course, depends on the individual Skaven, for some are better able to face their fears than others. In any case, what frightens one Skaven may not necessarily frighten another.

The Musk of Fear is a tool of survival, and it allows a single Skaven to warn his fellows that something is horribly wrong. When displayed between individuals, it is almost always a sign of deference, indicating that the Skaven who exudes the musk is, for whatever reason, displaying overwhelming awe and fear towards his leader. On the battlefield, however, the Musk of Fear can cause a warlord's best-laid plans to collapse. Units of Skaven Clanrats have been known to route to the last Ratman once the Musk of Fear spreads through their ranks.

The second most common Skaven musk is known as the Musk of Battle. The Musk of Battle is scented when a Skaven community has reached its upper limit in regards to population density and availability of food. More acrid than the Musk of Fear, it signals a slow but steady rise towards war for a warren, and rides the foul air of a Skaven nest until battle is joined or the situation improves. Entire populations of Skaven have been incited to fury by this stink.

Drugs and Warpstone

Skaven are hedonistic, so it is little surprise that drugs play an important role in their social order. Most Skaven drugs are simple concoctions that are designed to supply an intense, yet brief, euphoria in their users. Others, such as *skalm*, have legitimate medicinal purposes, while a few, such as Skavenbrew, are created in order to make Ratman warriors more effective in battle.

Amongst its multitude of uses, Warpstone can be administered as a drug. It is most commonly powdered and used as a snuff. Aside from a giddy feeling of self-confidence, Warpstone dust increases the magical abilities of any Skaven that ingests it. Prolonged use of Warpstone causes mutations in addicts, and these deformities are viewed by other Skaven with a combination of awe and contempt. Warpstone snuff is expensive and rare, so it is rarely seen in the possession of Clanrats; it is generally held by Grey Seers, Chieftains, and Warlords, among a few others.

Beyond its use as an arcane narcotic, Warpstone serves as a central pillar to Skaven society. Because of its seemingly magical power, Skaven consider Warpstone to be the holy spoor of the Horned Rat. Clan Skryre works Warpstone into nearly every mechanical device that they employ, and Skaven smiths add Warpstone dust to the weapons and armour they manufacture. Clan Moulder is no stranger to Warpstone, either, using concentrated doses of the stuff to induce mutations in its subjects. Even Clan Pestilens uses a distillation of Warpstone, mixed with a virulent disease, to empower its plague censers.

Thanks to its power and versatility, Warpstone is the most valued commodity in the Skaven world, and its acquisition drives the race's movements and plans. The strange luminous meteors that rained down upon Sylvania were composed of Warpstone, and the Skaven invasion of that cursed land was a direct result of its presence. Likewise, the destruction of Mordheim heralded the coming of the Skaven, who fought for dominance over Warpstone-laden ruins of the city.

Skaven Customs and Behaviour

The customs and behaviour of the Skaven are little known to the denizens of the Old World. The Skaven have a society rich in idiosyncrasy and customary behaviour.

Flattery

Respect is the cornerstone of Skaven culture. All Skaven demand respect and deference from their lessers. While keeping one's nose lowered to the proper level is an excellent beginning, those of lesser station also provide customary flattery to their superiors. This flattery takes many forms, but is typically verbal in nature. Bestowing creative euphemisms upon one's masters is an art form in many Under-Empire communities, especially amongst the Skaven of Clan Skryre. The more creative a Ratman's improvised flattery, the higher he will likely rise amongst his peers.

Examples include, "Yes-yes, shrewd-clever master," "most merciful of potentates," "killer-killer of man-things," "bold-brave leader," and so on.

Infanticide

When a victorious Skaven warlord overwhelms an opposing clan, it is common practice to kill and devour any juvenile Skaven remaining within the captured warrens. This is viewed a celebratory dinner of sorts, which virtually guarantees that

the clan's line ends with its offspring. Though elder Skaven are allowed to live and kept as slaves by the victors, they are never allowed access to breeding females unless they manage to distinguish themselves and rise above their new positions of servitude.

Marking

Marking is a peculiar custom amongst Skaven that involves urinating upon (or applying urine to) property in order to mark it as theirs. Skaven feel more comfortable when their possessions smell as they do, and marking is an excellent way for them to impregnate their gear with their own inimitable scent. In fact, high-ranking Skaven apply their urine to their subordinates, who in turn apply theirs to their subordinates, and so on and so forth.

Skaven also leave small marks behind them as they travel. One might expect this is done by Skaven in order to mark their territory, but the Ratmen instead leave these marks so that they know where they have been. It is akin to leaving a trail of breadcrumbs so they can find their way back to their homes. In some cases, the Skaven refrain from marking their paths, especially when they are attempting to disguise their presence.

Nose Elevation

Body language plays a large role in Skaven communication. Posture, especially, is an indication of a Skaven's attitude towards his peers, underlings, and superiors. It is important for a lesser Skaven to keep his nose below the level of his master's. This can result in entire rooms of Skaven who seemingly bob their heads at random because each is attempting to give respect to those above him while at the same time maintaining his superiority over those below his station.

Superstition

The Skaven are a superstitious race with a wide variety of credulous beliefs. Notable amongst these is their hatred of cats, of which they have an almost instinctive fear. Cats of all colours are seen as signs of ill omen by the Skaven, and white cats are especially unlucky. When sacking a village or town, Skaven raiders will invariably hunt down and kill every cat that they can find, throwing their corpses upon large pyres after severing their tails. Dogs, especially those terriers commonly employed by rat catchers, are given a similar treatment.

As with cats, birds of prey are viewed with displeasure by superstitious Skaven. It is often whispered that the siege of Middenheim in 1118 IC was doomed from the start after the shadow of a kestrel was seen fluttering over the battlefield. Nocturnal birds of prey, such as owls, are particularly despised.

Not all Skaven beliefs involve their fear of predators. For instance, legend has it that an entire army of Skaven was once lured to its doom by a Human playing upon a set of pipes. The story of the piper is told at banquets, and pipes are traditionally shunned by Skaven musicians as a result. Instead, the Skaven prefer bells of all sizes and tones when composing their own manner of discordant music.

Amongst signs of good fortune are bats. Not only are bats denizens of the Under-Empire, but Skaven find their squeaking to be soothing. Many notable Skaven keep bats as pets, and they feed them on blood and Warpstone dust. These creatures have been known to grow to disproportionate sizes, especially the ones that are kept by Clan Moulder. The number three is also seen as a lucky total by the Ratmen. Litters of three Skaven born to the same breeder are considered to be blessed by the Horned Rat.

Teeth Grinding

Skaven commonly grind their teeth together, which creates a low, grating noise. Referred to as "bruxing," the distinctive sound created by this activity is akin to a rapid chattering. Skaven teeth, especially their incisors, grow at an incredible rate, much like those of normal rats. In order to wear their teeth down, the Ratmen must gnaw upon objects, such as bones or special tooth files. Lacking any objects to chew upon, Skaven brux as required. Tooth grinding also occurs in times of stress, and a Skaven who bruxes constantly is surely in a state of anxiety or fear.

Verbal Abuse of Minions

It is customary for Skaven leaders to give their underlings their due, typically in the form of mild verbal abuse and chastisement. In doing so, Skaven leaders reinforce the worthlessness of their servants in relation to themselves. A Skaven who fails to insult his minions properly fails to maintain the proper chain of command. In many circles, failing to publicly slur one's subordinates is akin to treating them as equals. This is one Skaven custom that rarely goes unobserved.

Worship of the Horned Rat

The Horned Rat is the supreme god of the Skaven, and he brooks no other gods before him. Though not affiliated with the lords of Chaos, the Horned Rat is certainly a distant relative of those foul, nebulous beings. He represents all things the Skaven are, or wish to be. Undying and eternally scheming, this cunning deity patiently awaits the day of the Great Ascendancy, when his children will swarm across the face of the world, devouring it from within. Entropy is his mantra; decay is his stock in trade. All things must rot, figuratively or literally, and the Horned Rat and his offspring are the worldly reality of this simple truth.

All Skaven revere the Horned Rat. None question his existence. Such respect is a product of fear, for the Horned Rat's eternal hunger does not discriminate between his vermin children and the dwellers of the surface world. A devout Skaven utters small prayers to the Horned God throughout the day, each prayer being a verbal slice of hate, envy, or malice. These prayers are answered often enough to give the Horned Rat validity in the minds of his adherents, even in cases when divine intervention is obviously not involved.

Blood sacrifice is common in the day to day worship of the Horned Rat. The Skaven fear that if the Horned Rat's appetite is not satisfied, he will devour his children instead. The form of the sacrifice—a slave, Skaven or otherwise—is not as important as the sacrifice itself. There is no specific doctrine that governs who or what must be sacrificed. The sacrifice itself is enough to sate the Lord of Decay for a brief time. Young victims are considered to be the most potent sacrifices for the Horned Rat, while the blood of the aged and infirm is less desirable.

The number of sacrifices made to the Horned Rat by his followers varies considerably depending upon their need. In times of war, the number of daily blood sacrifices can be staggering, sometimes numbering in the thousands in the great Skaven cities of Skavenblight or Hell Pit. The Skaven also increase the number of daily sacrifices if they fail to secure victory in battle, or suffer some other embarrassing setback. The Grey Seers preach that victory cannot be won if the Horned Rat is unsatisfied with his minions, and thus, any defeat or failure is a sign that he must be appeased.

Religious services are constantly held by the Grey Seers in honour of their sinister god. All Skaven are expected to be present at a mass at least once a day, even though no formal records of attendance are kept. Those who do not attend services open themselves up to all manner of criticism, including accusations of heresy, treason, and atheism. Influential Skaven warlords contract their own spiritual advisers from the ranks of the Grey Seers, and these priests for hire give private services to their employers and their households.

The Grey Seers

The most devout of the Horned Rat's minions are known as the Grey Seers. No ordinary Skaven can become one of the Horned Rat's chosen. These Skaven are chosen at birth for their sacred duty, each being marked by grey or white fur. Most disturbingly, each Grey Seer is born with two small, bony nubs upon his head which eventually grow into twisting horns. The horns set the Grey Seers apart from the rest of their kin.

The birth of a Grey Seer is a rare and auspicious occasion. An infant so blessed is immediately carried off to be raised in seclusion by his kind. Such an apprenticeship is a long and dangerous course, and most Grey Seer juveniles do not survive the ordeal. They must not only suffer dangerous training and religious indoctrination, but they are also set one against the other, much as their mundane birthkin are. The stakes are indeed high, and the Horned Rat rewards those Grey Seers who are resourceful enough to carve their place within his priesthood's hierarchy.

Magical and sorcerous training are paramount to a Grey Seer's vocation. Each is an accomplished Wizard with access to destructive spells and terrifying powers. Such arcane ability is attributed to the Seer's connection to his god, but the energies that power such spells are drawn from the Seer himself. These powers do not originate with the Horned Rat. Instead, the Horned Rat gifts his unholy children with an enhanced ability to manifest such magic.

Once they have completed their apprenticeships and proven their ability to survive the cutthroat tactics of their brethren, young Grey Seers are allowed to administer their dark religion to the teeming Skaven hordes of the Under-Empire. They are expected to provide religious counsel to all of the Horned Rat's offspring, interpret signs and omens, and craft some manner of unity between the assorted clans. Their methods are varied, and their motives are often impure. Like other Skaven, the Grey Seers are often more interested in their individual successes, rather than the triumphs of their race as a whole.

The mere mention of their God aids the Grey Seers in mastering the politics of the Under-Empire. No clan dares to oppose them, lest they be declared heretics and be hunted down by the rest of their species. The oblique threat of being dubbed a heretic by a Grey Seer brings even the most rebellious Skaven back into line. Seers that oppose one another rarely engage in direct conflict. Instead, they use the Horned Rat's worshippers as pawns in a devious chess game that can last for decades.

Grey Seers define status within their organization through a combination of accomplishment and seniority. As they tend to be longer-lived than typical Skaven, age plays a substantial role in determining a Seer's standing within his religious order. At the pinnacle of this ever-changing pyramid, just below the Horned Rat himself, stands the Seerlord. The Seerlord is an enigmatic figure, the supreme religious leader of all Skaven. His ties to the Council of Thirteen are strong; indeed, it is rumoured one of the seats on the Council belongs to the Seerlord himself.

— Skaven Government —

The Skaven are a people with a long and proud tradition of government. They are ruled by the Council of Thirteen, an august body of powerful Skaven comprised of representatives of the most powerful Clans. Though they are ostensibly united by a common cause, the Council of Thirteen is fraught with infighting, conspiracy, and betrayal. Add the Grey Seers to this system of government, and things become even more intriguing.

The Council of Thirteen

The Council of Thirteen is the ruling body that oversees all matters pertaining to the Skaven, from hatching terrible plots to initiating an offensive against one of the hated Human cities on the surface. The Council consists of the Warlords of the Four Great Clans plus seven other lesser Warlords. The Seer Lord claims the twelfth seat, and the Council reserves the thirteenth seat for the Horned Rat. No others are permitted to sit in his place. To do so would be heresy. Though largely symbolic in nature, it is said that the Horned Rat's seat is occasionally taken by a shadowy figure with luminous green eyes. Whether this is an avatar of the Horned Rat or merely a Warpstone-induced hallucination is unknown.

The Council of Thirteen, the members of which are known individually as the Lords of Decay, unites the various Great and Lesser Clans under a single banner. While the Council holds sway over the entirety of the Under-Empire, the reality of a unified Skaven nation has yet to be fully realized. If it were not for the constant squabbling between the various Skaven clans, the Great Ascendancy would have occurred millennia ago. Instead, internecine fighting and bickering hold the Skaven back, much to the benefit of the Old World.

Each of the Great Clans—Eshin, Moulder, Pestilens, and Skryre—are represented on the Council of Thirteen. Though far from united in common cause, these four clans are the wealthiest and most influential of those that are represented. Together, they form a powerful bloc that can rarely, if ever, be defeated by the remaining Lesser Clans. Given the support of the Grey Seers and (purportedly) the Horned Rat, they form a powerful majority. The Lesser Clans often side with the Great Clans on important matters in order to protect their own interests. To anger the Great Clans, much less the Grey Seers, is to invite disaster.

Of the Lesser Clans that hold positions on the council, Clan Mors and Clan Skab are the most powerful. Mors is the most recent addition to the Council, gaining a seat after its defeat of the now-defunct Clan Rathe. Mors has grown exponentially in recent years, and threatens to rival the Great Clans. If Warlord Gnawdwell is careful, and chooses his battles wisely, he may well lead Clan Mors from its state as a Lesser Clan into a new Great Clan, the first to have done so since Clan Pestilens joined the Under-Empire.

The remaining Lesser Clans—Flem, Skaar, Sleekit, Skaul, and Verms—continue to live in the ever-growing shadows of the Great Clans. Their leaders consistently follow the party line out of fear. Their warlords know all too well that there are dozens, if not hundreds, of other Lesser Clans who would take any risk to gain a seat on the Council of Thirteen.

Seats on the Council are gained in one of three ways. The first, and most common, method for gaining a Council seat is to destroy a Clan that possesses one. By rights, the seat of a vanquished Clan belongs to the victor as a spoil of war. Whether the victor can maintain the seat once it has been taken is another matter entirely.

The second method involves an active challenge from another Clan which does not already have a seat on the Council. These challenges are rare, but they do occasionally happen. The challenging Warlord and his rival on the Council meet in single combat, to the death. The victor's Clan either gains or maintains the Council seat.

The final way to gain a Council Seat is to fill a vacant position. In times of battle, it is not unheard of for Clans to be completely destroyed by non-Skaven forces. In other incidents, entire Clans fall victim to plague. Such incidents leave vacancies on the Council which must be filled in order to keep the Skaven government running smoothly. Any Lesser Clan may petition for a place on the Council, and the remaining Council members draw lots to determine which clan is to receive the honour. This method is completely randomized and fair, of course, and is never tampered with.

The Council of Thirteen gathers, in whole or in part, at least once a month, and sessions are occasionally called on a weekly basis, especially in times of war. The Council members discuss battle plans, important issues that face their race, and strategy. Policy also plays an important part in the Council's discussions, and alliances are often made or broken in full view of the other members. The unity of the Council remains, at its core, an illusion. The members are all able plotters, each one skilled in conspiracy, and their schemes are rarely favourable to their colleagues.

On significant matters, the Council members submit votes to determine an issue's outcome. Each member has a single vote, and no one clan carries more authoritative weight than the rest . . . at least, not in theory. The truth of the matter is far from political equality, and the Lesser Clans are matched against one another by the Great Clans on issues of notable importance. Bribes and threats are exchanged, and it is these machinations that tip the balance one way or the other. In the case of ties, the Horned Rat has the swing vote, which is often interpreted by the Seerlord. In reality, this means the Grey Seers have two votes on the Council, but none dare question the Seerlord's ability to commune with the Horned God.

The majority of the Council's seats have been held by the same members for hundreds of years. These ancient Skaven are powerful indeed, their lives increased tenfold by foul magic and Warpstone. After so many centuries of plots and schemes, these elder Ratmen are well versed in the arts of subterfuge, betrayal, and survival.

The Four Great Clans

Of the multitude of Skaven clans, four stand out from the rest. These Great Clans hold much of the power in the Under-Empire, and each is the equal, both militarily and economically, of dozens of lesser clans. From the stealthy assassins of Clan Eshin to the twisted creations of Clan Moulder, the Great Clans each offer some asset to the Lords of Decay. These unique resources continue to guarantee that the Great Clans remain in power for generations to come.

Clan Eshin

Early in the history of the Skaven, Clan Eshin stole away to the Far East. Eshin was thought to have been lost for hundreds of years, but the Clan mysteriously returned to Skavenblight to offer its allegiance to the Lords of Decay. The time spent exploring the lands of Nippon, Ind, and Cathay had served Eshin well, for the clan had gained significant training in the arts of stealth and assassination.

The assassins of Clan Eshin are rightly feared by all Skaven. They come silently, dispense death with uncanny accuracy, and return to their warrens with their foes none the wiser. Their methods are seemingly supernatural, and the shadows appear to cling to them like spider webs. Rarely are their faces shown, for they hide them behind cowls and masks.

Clan Eshin is not merely a den of assassins. Because of their stealth, their fighters are also prized as spies and scouts. Eshin sells its services to the Warlords, offering skirmishers and light troops that can infiltrate the rear of an enemy's line to scout enemy formations or to dispatch leaders, wizards, and other valuable assets. Eshin also maintains a powerful cadre of informants from which they draw a great deal of useful information.

Eshin is shrouded in mystery, much more so than the other Great Clans. Little is known about the clan's inner workings, and this information is well-hidden from prying eyes and ears. Skaven who learn too much about the assassins have been known to wind up dead, or worse, which ensures that the clan will sustain its secrecy in the centuries to come.

Eshin's Motives

Information is a prized commodity amongst Clan Eshin's population, and secrets are not given away for free. It would seem that Clan Eshin strives to increase its own wealth and power in the Under-Empire by lending its services to anyone willing to pay their exorbitant prices. They have yet to use the secrets they have learned for their own power bids, or to provide false information to their clients for their own benefit. The clan has simply worked its way into the good graces of the Lords of Decay and continues to serve the Council unquestioningly. Whether this obedience will continue is a question that future generations must answer, but for the time being, Clan Eshin is virtually untouchable.

The Tactics of Clan Eshin

Clan Eshin is famed for canny stealth, for employing a variety of unusual and exotic weapons, and for its ability to kill swiftly and efficiently. Even the lowliest Clan Eshin warriors, the Night Runners, have some rudimentary skill at subterfuge,

being able to move quickly and quietly to strike at the hearts of their enemies. Those who survive and learn the greater techniques of the Art of Silent Death are promoted to Gutter Runners, who can sneak behind enemy lines and slaughter entire units of enemies, unseen and unheard.

Of all of Clan Eshin's warriors, though, the Adept Assassin is the most feared and reviled. These Skaven are masters in all of the techniques learned in distant Cathay and bring to bear an incredible array of fighting techniques that allow them to eclipse the greatest Human killers. Using a host of weapons from the throwing star and blowgun to the repeating crossbow and an arsenal of poisons, these dealers of death are blamed for the majority of suspicious murders in both Skaven and Dwarf societies, not to mention those untimely deaths in the Human lands by those who do not deny the Skaven menace.

Eshin—In Service to the Council

Over the centuries since their return, Eshin has achieved a special place within the Council of Thirteen, using their talents to cow and coral the lesser Clans and maintain the authority and influence of the Great Clans. In effect, they act as the secret police force to the Lords of Decay, the metaphorical poisoned dagger in the hand of the Council. Their political reach has grown long, for they hold the power to call any Skaven forward as a heretic or a traitor. Evidence of such crimes is easily manufactured, and in many cases, it need not be fabricated at all. It is for precisely this reason that the other clans avoid angering Clan Eshin, and indeed facilitate its investigations without objection.

Clan Eshin also uses more direct methods to quiet opposition to the Council's authority. Political murder is common amongst the Skaven, and Eshin excels at such activities as no other clan can. Countless deaths have been engineered by Eshin's assassins in the name of the Lords of Decay, and entire clans have been destroyed by their brothers after having been struck leaderless by a well-placed blade or poisoned dart. Though Clan Eshin offers its services to other customers who have little or no affiliation to the Council, it has never been proven that the clan has participated in treasonous activity.

Clan Moulder

Clan Moulder holds Hell Pit as their home and lair. The mines of this teeming Skaven metropolis are rife with Warpstone, and it is this material that is used to such excellent effect in the clan's horrific work. The Master Moulders meld flesh and bone like clay, breeding or building beasts that can be used to bolster their armies.

Given their exposure to the same mutating Warpstone they use in their experiments, the Master Moulders are something more (or less) than typical Skaven. Stories are told of Skaven Mutants that fly the banners of Clan Moulder, their bodies warped, twisted, and armoured, surgically-altered or hideously transformed. The Master Moulders tinker with the anatomies of creatures in much the same way that Clan Skryre's Warlock Engineers fiddle with mechanical war machines, and the end results of these biological experiments are often just as terrifying. Giant rats and Rat Ogres are just two awful examples of Clan Moulder's ingenuity.

Not only can the denizens of Clan Moulder create monsters well suited to warfare, they have also learned to control them. The Clan's Packmasters, wielding whips with exceptional skill, can drive Rat Swarms, Giant Rats, and Rat Ogres into the teeth of oncoming enemy formations where they can inflict the most damage. Off the battlefield, the Packmasters train their beasts to fight by pitting them against one another. The skilled and strong survive, the weak and wounded die.

Moulder's Motives

The mission of the Moulders is simple enough: to create, via surgery, breeding, or mutation, the most effective biological killing machines imaginable. These beasts not only swell the ranks of Clan Moulder's armies, but are sold to other clans, where they act as pets, bodyguards, or front-line shock troops. Moulder's goals have nearly been realized, and they work towards the day when their creations stand at the pinnacle of Skaven engineering. Indeed, the respect and awe the other Clans feel towards Clan Moulder is well-deserved.

Their twisted creations enhanced Moulder's prestige and influence in the Under-Empire, but it is whispered amongst the other Skaven that this Clan plots something else, something far more dangerous and sinister. Whatever it is, none can say with authority, but the sudden surge of new and terrifying creations spilling out from Hell Pit has more than one Skaven Clan nervous.

The Tactics of Clan Moulder

Beasts figure prominently in the methods and strategies of Clan Moulder. The principle units in any of Moulder's armies are the Packmasters, who direct hordes of Giant Rats, Rat Ogres, and mutated Rat Swarms against their enemies. Clanrat warriors, the most common antagonist in many Skaven armies, are only supplementary to this Clan's host.

The beasts of Clan Moulder are their calling cards. The Clan's menagerie of horrifying creations is seemingly endless, and exhibits a wide variety of mutated and surgically-altered beasts. Of course, the creatures Moulder creates are descended from monsters that have been captured, either in the icy wastes of Kislev or in the forestlands of the Empire south of Hell Pit. As a result, Moulder's Packmasters are quite adept at capturing live prey.

It has been said that each of Moulder's biological horrors is created with a built-in failsafe that prevents them from harming members of their parent clan. In addition, such creatures obey the Packmasters and Master Moulders without question, making them dangerous investments for anyone who wishes to purchase one. Should a customer become an enemy, he had best keep his attention focused on any Moulder-made pets that he keeps.

Moulder—In Service to the Council

The Council of Thirteen sees Clan Moulder as a valuable tool. The beasts they create are valuable, indeed. Not only do they

possess battlefield prowess oftentimes unmatched, but they also inspire terror in the enemies of the Skaven. Hordes of Giant Rats and packs of ravenous Rat Ogres can cause a line of troops to crumble even before they have made contact with them.

Moulder prides itself on the services it offers to discerning (not to mention wealthy) Skaven Warlords. Many of their creations are available for sale, and they are proud to offer custom designs made to order. The Council of Thirteen benefits from such options, and nearly every Lord of Decay is the proud owner of at least one Rat Ogre. Two or three council members possess nightmarish creations that few but the Master Moulders have ever seen.

Although their skills are geared towards changing bodies, the Master Moulders are quite adept in the healing arts as well. With the aid of Warpstone salves, any wound can be healed and any body can be improved. The oldest members of the Council of Thirteen have survived to their extreme ages through liberal applications of Clan Moulder's alchemy.

Clan Pestilens

The plague-ridden monks of Clan Pestilens emerged from the Lustrian rain forests centuries ago. Their initial contacts with the Under-Empire were less than peaceful, but after a time an accord was reached and Clan Pestilens became a productive segment of the Under-Empire. Riddled with disease and contagion, the Skaven of Clan Pestilens are devout worshippers of the Horned Rat. Though they recognize the Horned Rat's other attributes, they focus on his ability to create, control, and spread plagues.

After the clan's workers and captive labour are taken into account, the majority of Clan Pestilens' military strength lies in its Plague Monks. The Plague Monks are religious zealots dedicated to the worship of the Horned Rat. Their bodies are riddled with plague, and so used are they to pain that they barely feel it any longer. Combined with their religious fervour, this resistance to pain makes the Plague Monks incredibly capable combatants, especially en masse.

Pestilens' Motives

The Plague Monks believe that the rest of their Skaven brothers have been misled by the Grey Seers. They feel that the average Ratman has been blinded to what they profess to be the true face of the Horned Rat; namely, pestilence itself. The clan's overriding goal is to bring the rest of the Under-Empire into the fold, while avoiding declarations of heresy from the Grey Seers. Appeasing the Grey Seers for the time being is the only way to succeed. In time, once their victories have been secured and the rest of the Skaven clans have been won over, the Grey Seers, too, will follow their example, or die.

Like the Grey Seers, the Plague Monks, Priests, and Deacons of Clan Pestilens believe the time of the Great Ascendancy is fast approaching. Pestilens' peculiar twist on this mythology is that the Horned Rat will only allow such a victory if the majority of the Under-Empire has converted to their form of worship. How else can one explain the failures wrought time and time again by the bumbling campaigns of the Lords of Decay?

In the long run, Clan Pestilens intends to decimate the populations of the Old World with a mixture of plague, pox, and brute force. Given their own unnatural resistance to diseases, the Plague Deacons feel that once the entire Skaven race has accepted the truth and become one with the illnesses they create, total world conquest is only a short distance way.

The Tactics of Clan Pestilens

The plagues of Clan Pestilens kill insidiously, regardless of an enemy's arms or armour. They are quiet weapons that do not risk the lives of the near-immune Plague Monks that spread them. The enemy even spreads the diseases for the Skaven, and provides breeding grounds for the plagues in the form of the poor sanitation and hygiene in the majority of the Old World's cities. As an added bonus, diseases do not destroy structures, equipment, or other spoils of war.

Once the plagues have been spread and allowed to do their work, the madness and resilience of the Clan's Plague Monks make the fighting forces of Pestilens powerful foes on any battlefield. Formations of frothing Plague Monks are led into battle by a line of Censer Bearers, Skaven chosen to wield sacred plague censers against their foes. The Pestilens believe that their enemies will either fall to the plague or will fall to despair when their kin succumb. Even if they survive the physical and mental anguish that plague brings, they will be so weakened in body and spirit that they will easily fall before the vermin hordes.

One of Pestilens' methods of spreading disease involves specially-bred rats. These Plague Rats are infected with any one of a number of diseases, and are then released into the sewers

and alleyways of an Old World city. Rats are a common sight in any city, and the Plague Rats of Clan Pestilens seem no different from alley rats to the casual observer. They creep on quiet feet into the homes and larders of the Old World, leaving behind diseased droppings and half-eaten foodstuffs.

Another tactic Pestilens uses to spread diseases involves the use of prisoners. These unfortunate wretches are infected with a plague that is slow to manifest. Once infected, the Skaven release them. When they make their way back to their people, they become the unwitting killers of thousands of their own kind. By the time the symptoms are evident, it is far too late.

Pestilens—In Service to the Council

Pestilens serves the Lords of Decay by destroying their enemies with fresh-brewed plagues the likes of which the Old World has never seen. The Council is all too happy to accept Pestilens' aid in battle, as disease is a powerful weapon in anyone's arsenal. Not only are the Plague Lords capable of creating new ailments, they are also quite able to effortlessly cure a number of diseases.

While the general consensus of Clan Pestilens' members is that curing any sickness or disease is akin to blasphemy, they know that now is not the best time to make such revelations known to their masters on the Council. The Lords of Decay can easily recognize the value of Pestilens' contributions to their war efforts, and they continue to enlist their aid as the end times approach ever closer.

Clan Skryre

Clan Skryre holds sway in Skavenblight, a teeming Skaven metropolis considered by many to be the capital of the Under-Empire. Access to the city's plentiful veins of Warpstone allows the Clan to expand upon the technologies for which they are renowned. The city reflects the nature of its Skryre masters, being atypically modern when compared to most other Skaven settlements.

Without a doubt, Skryre is the wealthiest and most powerful of all the Great Clans. The Clan's strength rests on artifice and sorcery in equal measures. Much of their technology is geared towards war, mixing equal amounts of magic and Warpstone to create weapons unparalleled anywhere in the Old World. Fortunately for Clan Skryre's foes, their weapons are often as dangerous to the Skaven as they are to their targets.

Because weapons are Skryre's stock in trade, the clan's other mechanical feats are easily overlooked. Skryre succeeded in creating many exciting devices, from the Warprail, connecting one end of the Under-Empire to the other, to the Farsqueaker, a device allowing instant communication between Skaven over great distances. Indeed, much of the Under-Empire's mining is accomplished by way of Skryre-manufactured earthmovers and rock drills.

The Clan's Warlock Engineers are constantly researching new technologies. Skryre's experiments are just as likely to succeed as they are to fail, however, often with catastrophic results. The Warlock Engineers feel that such failures are to be expected, especially those riding on the cutting edge of technology. The number of labourers, mechanics, and engineers that die as a result of this research is irrelevant when compared to the value of a successful experiment.

Skryre's Motives

Clan Skryre expands its own power by augmenting its access to items of high technology. By delving into new areas of research and making great discoveries, the clan increases its prestige amongst its rivals. In addition, Skryre-manufactured equipment proven on the battlefield is often sold or leased to other Clans, creating a widespread reliance on Clan Skryre equipment, ensuring their place on the Council.

The Warlock Engineers of Clan Skryre are in no way ashamed of adapting and improving the technologies of the other races. The warplock jezzail is an example of a piece of mundane equipment stolen by Skryre and perfected with liberal amounts of Warpstone-laced iron and steel. Their heavier weapons, such as the ratling gun and warpfire thrower, resemble designs that were originally produced by Dwarf engineers in years long past. Though Skryre ingenuity is capable of great invention and original design, it is also capable of modification as well.

The Tactics of Clan Skryre

Clan Skryre utilises its technological superiority to great advantage on the battlefield. Though Clan Skryre relies on Clanrats to shoulder much of the military burden, their warriors are far better equipped than typical Clanrats of other lesser Clans, and their weapons are capable of destruction on a massive scale. Heavy weapon teams using ratling guns and warpfire throwers, while the better-trained Clanrats are

equipped with warplock pistols. Enemies are softened up by Poison Wind Globadiers, specially-trained Skaven who fling poison gas-filled glass spheres into the ranks of their foes. Skaven snipers set up away from the front lines with their warplock jezzails, where they pick off important targets at will. Closer to the rear of Skryre formations sit large cannons that are capable of launching bolts of destructive warp lightning. Serviced by numerous technicians and engineers, warp-lighting cannons are prone to exploding if they are improperly maintained.

Like all other Skaven clans, Skryre is willing make great sacrifices if it means that they will achieve ultimate victory over their enemies. Firing a warp-lighting cannon or ratling gun through their own troops in order to destroy a powerful enemy or weapon is perfectly acceptable to Skryre's warlords.

Skryre—In Service to the Council

By supplying the Council of Thirteen with infernal machines, Clan Skryre ensures its own position of power within the Under-Empire. Each member of the Council is well aware of Skryre's value, and the Clan will never allow them to forget it. New inventions and devices of war are constantly demonstrated to the Lords of Decay, and the most promising of these receive funding from the rest of the Great and Lesser Clans. Many victories have been achieved by the deeds of the Warlock Engineers and their lackeys, who were in turn supported by the inventions of Clan Skryre.

Other, less destructive, devices are also put to use in the name of the Skaven people as a whole. The Farsqueaker, for example, allows the Council to communicate with its agents in the field. In addition, Skryre maintains the Warprail, a system of tracks and warp-powered transport cars allowing fast subterranean transport of troops and equipment. The powerful machines that are used to mine tunnels and move rocks and soil away from the Under-Empire's byways are also Skryre designs. So long as Clan Skryre continues to supply the Under-Empire with valuable services and (somewhat) reliable weaponry, it shall remain the most powerful of the Great Clans.

The Warlord Clans

Most Skaven claim membership to one of the lesser Warlord Clans. There's no telling how many there are, but most believe they number in the hundreds. Rivalry among these lesser Clans is fierce and treachery is rampant. A new clan can rise and fall in a matter of days. Among these small factions, there are a few that stand out from the rest, though even they pale before the might of the Great Clans. Though weaker, they do have representation on the Council of Thirteen.

Clan Flem

Often confused with Clan Pestilens, the Skaven of Clan Flem are deeply invested in the arts of plague. They differ from their far more powerful rivals in that they lack the religious trappings of the Plague Monks, though few other Skaven make the effort to notice or distinguish the two clans. Clan Flem walks a dangerous road, knowing full well that Pestilens tolerates their existence and also knowing that it is just a matter of time before Pestilens absorbs them into their sickened fold. Until this happens, Flem knows to follow its betters and always supports Pestilens in all that they do.

Clan Mors

The Skaven of Clan Mors are considered to be upstarts by the Great Clans. Due to recent victories and prodigious expansion, Clan Mors is very near to matching Clans Eshin, Pestilens, Moulder, and even Skryre in sheer power and influence. Together, the four Great Clans might easily crush Mors, much as they have destroyed other upstart clans in the past. Yet Mors continues to flaunt its power, and none are certain why the Great Clans have failed to act as they are expected to.

Warlord Gnawdwell, the mastermind behind Clan Mors' unbridled success and the unquestioned master of the City of Pillars, now sits upon the Council of Thirteen. His ruthless methods have resulted in the deaths of many of his rivals, as well as the outright destruction of at least six lesser Clans. With these triumphs, Gnawdwell has increased the wealth and power of Clan Mors to unprecedented levels. The Skaven of defeated Clans have increased Mors' military strength, not to mention its labour force, and conquered strongholds across the Under-Empire proudly fly the their banner.

Rumours have spread that the Great Clans live in fear of Gnawdwell's sinister reputation. Many great Skaven have been struck down as a result of the warlord's schemes, and there is no telling what he will do if he is forced to defend his clan's newfound prestige. Even if Gnawdwell himself were to be assassinated, any one of a number of his subordinates would likely rise to usurp his position. Given the effectiveness of the clan's battle strategies to date, it would be foolish to assume it would crumble if Gnawdwell were killed.

The Skaven of Mors are uncharacteristically united as one, and exhibit a loyalty to their leaders unheard of in Skaven society. Even those Skaven who have been conscripted into Mors from less fortunate clans are soon heard voicing praises to Gnawdwell and his staff. None are certain if this loyalty is a result of sorcery most foul, as of yet undiscovered drugs, or the product of something else that has yet to be discovered.

Mors' Motives

Like any of the Lesser Clans, Mors covets a place amongst the Great Clans. Warlord Gnawdwell has made it very clear that he believes he is the one to lead all Skaven to their inevitable victory over the surface world and its furless inhabitants. Given his continued success and prowess in battle, perhaps he is correct.

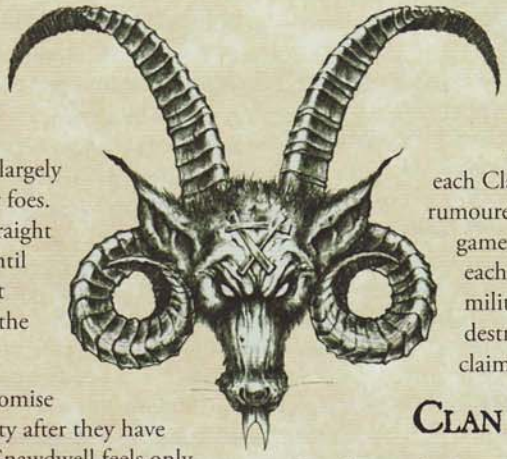
The other clans are hesitant to accede to his call for an invasion of the world above, citing that the time is not yet ripe for another invasion. Gnawdwell dismisses such reasons as pitiful excuses, but he his hesitant to throw away his recently gained ascension to the Council of Thirteen. So he bides his time until his place is somewhat stronger in the Council. He is instead content to rest on his laurels for the time being, basking in the

plentiful adoration of his troops.

The Tactics of Clan Mors

Clan Mors employs a variety of techniques, from the tried and true waves of slaves and Clanrats to the mysterious assassinations employed by their trained killers. Perhaps their strongest asset is their use of poisons, for which they are famous throughout the Under-Empire. Still, the tactics of Clan Mors are hard to predict because their greatest strength is their rapid adaptation to the situation at hand. Unlike the Great Clans, they are not heavily invested in or beholden to any one particular method of war or weapon of choice, and that versatility is a notable asset among the often single-minded Skaven.

In battle, Mors has proven to be unrelenting, brutal, and merciless in the extreme. Forces that are put to field against the Clan are often wiped out to the last lowly Clanrat. Clans that have faced Mors' troops in the past suffered from poor morale, largely due to the merciless reputation of their foes. By comparison, units that surrender straight away are shown quarter and isolated until their clan has been soundly defeated, at which time they are incorporated into the ranks of Mors' Clanrat slaves.



Skaven of defeated Clans who show promise are elevated to positions of responsibility after they have proved themselves to be trustworthy. Gnawdwell feels only those Skaven who are deserving of servitude be consigned to the ranks of the slaves, while those with something to offer Clan Mors should be used appropriately. While betrayal and backstabbing are still ever-present factors within the ranks of Clan Mors, they are viewed as methods for deserving Skaven to advance the agenda of the Clan as a whole. For example, the murder of a superior that actively hinders the success of Clan Mors is akin to treason. If the shift in power is beneficial to the Clan, however, the murderer is lauded as a true patriot.

Mors—In Service to the Council

Clan Mors has yet to prove its value to the Lords of Decay, though it will indeed have an opportunity to do so if Warlord Gnawdwell has his way. The Council itself is not yet sure how to best employ Clan Mors, and discussions between individual Council members have been heated on this topic for some time. It is no secret that Skryre wishes to see Mors destroyed, a sentiment Clan Moulder has dismissed on many occasions. Pestilens, which was in a similar position to Mors' at one time, has yet to make a determination. Eshin, of course, keeps its own counsel regarding the upstart clan.

Of the Lords of Decay, it seems only the Seer Lord has lent his support to Clan Mors. The unity exhibited by Mors' members, which is an obvious factor in its recent successes, intrigues the Seer Lord. If the methods by which Gnawdwell guarantees the loyalty and stability of his Clanmates can be discovered, then perhaps the Great Ascendancy will become reality. After all, it is the duty of the Grey Seers to keep the Skaven united as a race, and Gnawdwell has obviously seen some success in keeping his own forces in line.

Clan Skab

Regarded as some of the finest warriors in Skaven society, Clan Skab Clanrats are often leased out to other Clans for service. Even more important, Clan Skab tends to produce more Black Skaven than other Clans, and so they have an inordinately high number of Stormvermin in their ranks. These expertly trained warriors are often sold to other Clans to act as guards for Chieftains and Warlords, or are claimed by the Grey Seers for similar purposes.

Clan Skaar

Clan Skaar is known for its extensive mining operations. Skilled at ferreting out lodes of Warpstone, they often work closely with Clan Skryre and Clan Moulder, supplying each Clan with the precious substance. It's rumoured that Clan Skaar plays a dangerous game, pitting Moulder and Skryre against each other. Most Skaven believe that this militarily weak Clan will eventually be destroyed, and their mining operations claimed, by Skryre, Moulder, or both.

Clan Skaul

It isn't entirely clear to anyone why Clan Skaul maintains its position on the Council of Thirteen. The clan's population is composed almost entirely of hedonists and addicts who persist in making extensive use of Warp-laced narcotics. One answer for their success may lie in the fact that several Grey Seers have been born to Skaul's breeders within the past five decades. Some postulate that the drug use of the clan's rank and file may have something to do with the increased number of Grey Seers being born there.

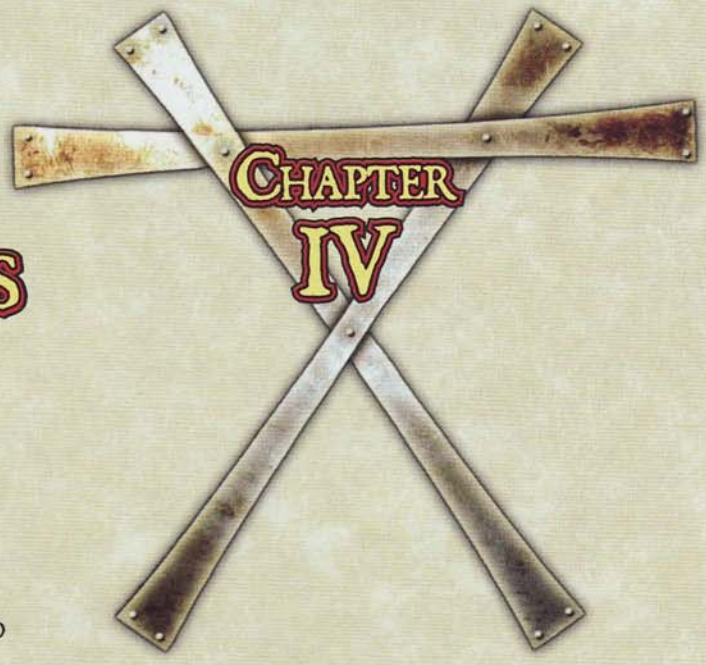
Clan Sleekit

Many of the byways of the Under-Empire are linked by subterranean rivers and seas. While most Skaven avoid these regions for the dark things they are said to contain, Clan Sleekit sees these routes as a commodity. Expert boatmen and navigators, the Skaven of Clan Sleekit are said to have explored the dim reaches of the world below, and harbour terrible secrets about what other things lurk in the sunless world.

Clan Verms

Clan Verms is a pitiful Clan, shunned and reviled by all others, even those lesser clans who cannot hope to compete with its rather limited power. Verms has affinity with insects, bugs, and other types of vermin. Many species of over-sized insects, spiders, and the like have been attributed to the experiments of Clan Verms.

Skaven Settlements



"Can't you hear them? The scratching? The skittering? The squeeking? They are under our very feet!"

—Bort the Mad

The Skaven are not the simple Chaos spawn they are believed to be. Most people imagine the Skaven squatting in bare caves, cursing the world above them while they gnaw bones and scheme incessantly. They are rarely given credit for industry of any kind, much less for their skill as homemakers and city builders. The truth is far more terrifying, especially considering that the world of the Skaven, which they refer to as their Under-Empire, is a sinister reflection of the surface world.

— The Under-Empire —

The Skaven are a subterranean race. They live their whole lives beneath the ground (except when battling to conquerthe surface), and their Under-Empire encompasses an area much larger than the surface of the Old World. Far from an unsophisticated species, Skaven are master architects who skilfully excavate their collective homes within the depths of the earth. Rather than using natural caverns exclusively, as some might expect, the Ratmen create their own environments beneath the earth. This is not to say that natural caverns are never utilized by the Skaven, but those that are have often seen some modification to a greater or lesser degrees.

Geography of the Under-Empire

The Under-Empire stretches from one end of the Old World to the next. Its borders are not defined in the same sense as those on the surface. The fact that the Skaven have been sighted in places as far away as Araby and Cathay indicates they are indeed a widely-travelled race. Skaven do not willingly travel under the open sky of the surface world, and instead use a variety of underground avenues when moving great distances. These passageways have been millennia in the making, and the most widely-used of them have felt the pitter-patter of billions of Skaven feet over the centuries of their use.

As with any surface city, the size of a Skaven settlement depends on the amounts and types of resources readily available there. Warpstone, especially, is a prized commodity to the Skaven, and cities in proximity to plentiful Warpstone veins are often the largest and most populous in the Under-Empire. Besides this precious ore, a settlement's access to foodstuffs and fresh water are also important. Other commodities, such as easy availability of captive labour, also play a role in determining how prosperous a Skaven settlement is.

The Skaven's Under-Empire closely mirrors the surface world in most respects. Nearly every single unsuspecting surface city has some manner of Skaven warren nestled beneath its streets. While the size of the city does not always reflect the population of the Skaven settlement beneath it, the largest Human burgs tend to have correspondingly large Skaven populations. The Ratmen are able to gain easy access to these cities through the use of man-made tunnel systems and sewers, which the Skaven cleverly combine with their own networks of passageways.

Climate in the Under-Empire

Weather in the Under-Empire is more or less constant. Temperature in the caverns, tunnels, and passages of the Skaven world is affected by a great many things: humidity, depth, available water sources, wind, and sources of geothermal heat. A vast cavern that teems with Skaven is much warmer than it would be otherwise, simply due to the body heat that they generate. The Skaven, having adapted to life underground, are typically comfortable under most circumstances, though, like men, they are not overly fond of extremes of either heat or cold.

Highways and Byways: Joining the Under-Empire Together

The Skaven utilize a complex series of tunnels, passageways, and caverns to navigate between settlements, as well as between destinations on the surface. By far, the most common mode of transportation used by Skaven is shank's mare; in other words, their own two feet. As individuals, Skaven's inherent laziness and constant hunger keep them from moving about very much. When part of a large group determined to reach a goal, however, they can become both fast and tireless. The Musk of War or other variant scents, combined with the cruel whips of taskmasters and a group instinct, allow them to cover great distances with little or no rest.

Another mode of transportation used by the Skaven is the Warprail. Designed by the Warlock Engineers of Clan Skryre, the Warprail is a train driven along a system of iron rails by a massive warp-engine. Though still experimental, the Warprail has been proven to be the fastest mode of transportation in the Under-Empire—that is, when it works. Given their construction, the warp-engines powering the Warprail are prone to overheating and experience constant problems with pressure regulation. If not properly maintained, warp-engines can explode, causing a catastrophic loss of life as well as the inevitable cave-in of the tunnel they travel through.

If not for these minor setbacks, the Warprail would be the pre-eminent form of travel between major Skaven settlements. As it is, there are only a handful of Warprail engines available, and not all of them are in working order at any given time. In addition, Warprail engines require tracks laid down in stable tunnels, and thus far these only exist between major Skaven cities, such as Skavenblight, Hell Pit, and the City of Pillars. As Clan Skryre continues to perfect its warp-engine technology, additional tunnels and tracks will doubtless be implemented, allowing the Skaven to move large bodies of troops and supplies between their cities with unprecedented ease.

Skaven Settlements

Each Skaven settlement is different, reflecting the personality of the clan or clans that call it home. Given that the Skaven psyche is invariably linked to Chaos, no two Skaven cities are built to the same specification. Some sprawl out over a great distance, while others are compressed areas of intertwining tunnels and passageways that loop and twist over and beneath one another like knotted and tangled ropes.

Skaven settlements are defined by their sizes and populations, much like Human cities, towns, and villages are. The largest settlements are, unsurprisingly, referred to as cities. Skaven cities are sprawling complexes that are, in large part, self-sufficient. These metropolises can easily accommodate from 10,000 to 50,000 Skaven, though population varies depending on the current political climate. A Skaven city often has up to twice the number of residents as its mirror Human city on the surface; in times of great plenty, the population may be much, much higher.

The next most populous Skaven settlements are referred to as warrens. Warrens are the equivalent of Human towns in size and composition. While not completely self-sufficient, they are typically able to support themselves so long as they can trade with other settlements for products they do not produce. The population of a Skaven warren can range from 1,000 to 10,000 Skaven strong.

The smallest of the Skaven communities are commonly called nests. Nests are akin to villages and hamlets on the surface world, and they are often closely tied to a nearby city, warren, or stronghold. Nests are rarely home to less than 50 individuals, with the largest of them providing shelter to as many as 1,000 Ratmen. Nests are commonly affiliated with a single Clan or Warlord.

Though they are not settlements in the strictest sense of the word, Skaven strongholds deserve some mention. Like the keeps, castles, and citadels of the surface world, strongholds are easily defensible dwellings often at the centre of Skaven communities. They are veritable fortresses with carefully restricted access points and brutally effective defences. If they are not incorporated into a warren or city, strongholds are traditionally affiliated with client nests that provide labour, revenue, and conscripts.

Skaven Architecture

Skaven cities are massive, with a perplexing number of structures packed into a small place. However, Skaven are not great builders; they see things in the short-term, slapping together make-shift hovels that serve the moment. Skaven would rather steal a home than build a new one. And if a neighbouring home cannot be stolen, the spiteful Ratmen have no compunctions against burrowing beneath it to sink it.

Skaven cities therefore tend toward ramshackle collections of debris and detritus. Skaven use wood, dung, and mud as their materials. The only thing that keeps these buildings from falling down is the skill of the slaves that shore up and rebuild them. Few structures have foundations, and if so, it's because a Human or Dwarf builder thought to incorporate one. As a result of this shoddy architecture, fire is a big threat, and buildings collapse all the time. Style depends solely on the workers. Humans and Dwarfs bring their views and talents to some buildings, but such structures are reserved for the important Skaven. On occasion, these buildings might be built on sensible lines, along paths or even roads, but again, such quality stems from slave ingenuity and never Skaven forethought. Even the better buildings are rarely finished, given the life expectancy of slaves and even the Skaven themselves, so most settlements are collections of incomplete and plundered structures.

The only exceptions to these slapdash and dangerously precarious structures are the temples of the Horned Rat. Ostentatious amounts of Warptokens, slaves, and materials are granted by status-seeking Skaven wanting to curry favour with the Grey Seers. These temples usually have a tower and bell—the tower has thirteen storeys, which represents the Council. Beneath the temple is a labyrinth, which is used as a divinatory tool as well as a method of initiation for Apprentices as well as an excellent mode for executing undesirables. The maze is sacred to the Horned Rat, and those that can find their way through it are deemed to have been guided by the will of the Skaven God. Those who become lost or die in one of the many traps have clearly been abandoned by their God and are thus worthy of death. Needless to say, there are many traps, shifting walls, and hidden passages in these mazes.

The Skaven, as a species, are not overly fond of right angles. Instead, they prefer tunnels that are smooth, rounded, and almost organic in appearance. Depending on the purpose of a particular passage, its size can show a great deal of variation. Tunnels designed to accommodate individual Skaven are often no larger than five feet in diameter. Given the compact and lithe physiology of the Skaven, this provides more than enough room for them to manoeuvre. Large thoroughfares, on the other hand, are designed with vehicles and large crowds in mind, and can be nearly any size at all.

The mining of tunnels and passages is relegated to captive labour, be it Skaven, Human, Elf, or Dwarf. Excavation techniques are, by and large, simple. Shovels, picks, trowels, and other hand tools are used to dislodge and move large amounts of earth, stone, and rock in order to create passageways. Larger Skaven settlements skilfully incorporate massive natural caverns, in addition to Skaven-made tunnels and chambers. Craftsmen (or craftsrats, sometimes) assist in finishing the tunnels, ensuring that they are stable and visually pleasing. Of course, the aesthetics of the Skaven often leave a lot to be desired, especially by the standards of other subterranean races such as Dwarfs.

Since they spend much of their lives in proximity to their broodmates, Skaven are not accustomed to privacy. As such, doors are an uncommon sight in the Under-Empire. Many high-ranking and influential Skaven seal their personal chambers with wooden or stone doors, or with iron bars and gates, in order to keep unwanted trespassers and assassins out. Privacy is not considered a luxury available to the likes of the masses, however. The Skaven also have little use for windows, so they are rarely, if ever, incorporated. The only exception to this is in defensive fortifications, such as arrow slits and murder holes.

The sleeping areas used by the Skaven are communal in nature, and are often dictated by clan affiliation. Skaven construct bedding and nesting areas out of anything that they can scrounge, from mouldering straw, to animal skins and furs, to old clothes and discarded cloth. Position in these communal sleeping areas is largely dependent on an individual Skaven's social status, with the most influential sleeping closer to the top of the pile.

Areas with high concentrations of Skaven living in them smell very strongly of rat urine. This is due in part to the fact Skaven leave small markings wherever they go. Skaven have little difficulty identifying their own marks by scent, as well as the marks made by their kin and associates. Skaven have no concept of privies. Just about any spot of open ground that is even slightly out of the way is an appropriate place for a Skaven to relieve himself.

Skaven Communities of Note

The Under-Empire is vast, and nearly every city, village, or town harbours a corresponding Skaven community. Populations vary, but it is a general rule of thumb that the Skaven population of a city, warren, or nest will be nearly twice that of its mirror settlement on the surface. In times of great plenty, Skaven populations can grow exponentially, triggering both internecine warfare and upward expansion.

Each community detailed herein is given a broad overview, including such things as location, population, industries, and clan affiliations. A capsule description is also provided, along with a brief adventure hook. Most of these adventure hooks are designed with Skaven parties in mind, but they can be easily modified for use with a group of non-Skaven protagonists.

Black Chasm

Location: A series of jagged cliffs and caverns in Bretonnia.
Population: 25,000
Industries of Note: None. The strongholds of Black Chasm produce little of worth, though several artefacts of Clan Pestilens have been recovered in recent years.
Major Clan Affiliations: Eshin (35%), Pestilens (34%), Moulder (18%), Flem (13%)

Black Chasm has been a site of strife between the Skaven since Clan Pestilens returned from its long sojourn to Lustria. It was here that Pestilens' ancestors made one of their earliest homes. Their ancient forebears carved out a series of strongholds within the limitless depths of the Black Chasm itself. The assassins of Clan Eshin claimed the abandoned strongholds for themselves, and refused to return control of them to Pestilens upon the clan's return from the west. In modern times, Pestilens relies on its relationship with Clan Flem as it fights to regain its lost legacies, while Clan Eshin has been employing the Packmasters of Clan Moulder to better cement its position.

Adventure Hook

The fighting between Eshin and Pestilens has spilled out of Black Chasm, and threatens to boil over into Skavenblight. The Lords of Decay have met to discuss the situation, with Pestilens' representative being conspicuously absent. Someone must be sent to negotiate a truce between Eshin and Pestilens before their war causes destruction in the Skaven capital.

The City of Pillars

Location: Within the ruins of Karak Eight-Peaks in the southern World's Edge Mountains.
Population: 95,000
Industries of Note: Clan Mors mines the rich Warpstone veins surrounding the City of Pillars, using the proceeds to expand its military might. The clan also trains mercenary troops, which it offers to the other clans at competitive prices.
Major Clan Affiliations: Mors

The City of Pillars is an impressive metropolis currently held by the Skaven of Clan Mors. In centuries past, the City of Pillars was the Dwarf stronghold of Karak Eight-Peaks. The Dwarfs who lived and worked there were assaulted by both the Ratmen and the Greenskin races, causing them to retreat from their fallen citadel. In the years since, the City of Pillars has changed hands from Clan to Clan. Clan Mors now occupies the city, which is known for its massive subterranean vaults with their expertly-crafted pillars.

Adventure Hook

Clan Mors, in conjunction with a rogue Warlock Engineer, is working on a secret weapon. None are certain what Mors plans to use the weapon for, but Clan Skryre is desperate to gather more information. If possible, Skryre would also like to see the weapon stolen, or at least destroyed, along with the traitorous Warlock Engineer.

Hell Pit

Location: Far to the north of Praag, in the land of Kislev.
Population: 115,000
Industries of Note: Clan Moulder breeds all manner of monsters in the breeding pits that give this Skaven metropolis its name: Hell Pit. These beasts are put through a rigorous selection process to weed out the weak. Those that remain are trained and used to fight Clan Moulder's wars, or are sold or leased to other clans to aid in their own conquests. Warpstone production is also one of Hell Pit's primary industries, even though most of what is mined is funnelled into Clan Moulder's breeding programs.
Major Clan Affiliations: Moulder

Clan Moulder calls Hell Pit its home. The air of the city carries a constant mixture of strange sounds and miasmas rising from the breeding pits of the Master Moulders. Of casual interest to visitors is the Warp Menagerie, which provides an impressive, albeit horrific, view of Clan Moulder's accomplishments in the arts of breeding, mutation, and surgical alteration. The growls, cries, and shrieks of the creatures in the Menagerie can be heard from one end of the city to the other, and when mixed with the cacophony of the breeding pits, the noise is sanity-blasting.

Adventure Hook

Saboteurs breeched the cages of the Warp Menagerie, unleashing dozens of radically mutated and altered beasts onto the very streets of Hell Pit. The monsters have spread out, each wreaking a wide swath of destruction throughout the city. Someone needs to rein the monsters in before they reach the breeding pits, where they are sure to disrupt the work of the Master Moulders.

Mousillon

Location: Beneath the ruined city of Mousillon in Bretonnia.
Population: 55,000
Industries of Note: Clan Pestilens holds sway in Mousillon, and the city acts as a testing ground for some of the clan's newest and most virulent plagues. Rich veins of Warpstone are mined here, as well.
Major Clan Affiliations: Pestilens (93%), Flem (7%)

The Bretonnian city of Mousillon has been under a terrible curse for many, many years. It was struck by a powerful earthquake long ago, and has never full recovered. The Human city continues to sink slowly deeper into the stagnant earth that surrounds it, even as plagues from below seep up to take their toll on the few residents that remain. Clan Pestilens has since taken up residence in the sewers and tunnels beneath Mousillon, even as the city that once lay above them gradually sinks to merge with their own horrible metropolis. Vying for resources are a great number of Ghouls, purportedly led by the Cannibal Knight, who presides over his court in a twisted mockery of the lands above. For more information on Mousillon, be sure to check out *Barony of the Damned*.

Adventure Hook

A new plague has come to several villages and towns just outside of Mousillon, which has attracted the attention of the local authorities. The presence of the Skaven beneath Mousillon must remain a secret, lest the Bretonnians destroy the Ratmen once and for all. Resourceful characters may be able to use this to their advantage, especially if they have made themselves enemies of Pestilens.

Queekwell

Location: East of the Tilean city of Pavona, beneath the Apuccini Mountains.
Population: 450
Industries of Note: Small-scale mining of Warpstone, iron, and precious metals.
Major Clan Affiliations: Clan Skaar

Queekwell is a nest near Clan Skaar's stronghold in Pavona. It is a small mining village, typical of any nest that claims allegiance to a nearby stronghold or warren. The sleepy, small-town feeling of Queekwell is often interrupted by occasional earthquakes that seem to be centred in the mines themselves. Workers often meet their ends in cave-ins and the like, but Clan Skaar demands that the mining continues.

Adventure Hook

Something has been uncovered by Clan Skaar's Clanrats, deep in the mines of Apuccini. Clan Skaar is particularly cautious about tipping its hand, and has revealed little of the nature of its discovery. Rumours abound that they have revealed anything from a hidden cache of Chaos artefacts to a rich vein of Warpstone that lay previously undiscovered. Some suspect that whatever Clan Skaar has uncovered relates to the region's persistent earthquakes.

Skavenblight

Location: Rumoured to be beneath the Blighted Marshes.
Population: 250,000
Industries of Note: Warpstone mining is one of Skavenblight's largest industries, making it one of the richest Skaven cities in the Under-Empire. Besides mining, Clan Skryre maintains one of its largest engineering colleges in Skavenblight, and many of the clan's inventions are designed and built here. The Grey Seers call Skavenblight their home, and they exert an inordinate amount of control over the entire metropolis.
Major Clan Affiliations: Skryre (25%), Moulder (22%), Eshin (18%), Pestilens (16%), Mors (11%), others (8%)

Thanks to the dominance of Clan Skryre, Skavenblight is choked with mechanical devices of all kinds. Public transportation, while dangerous and unreliable, is one of the city's most impressive features. Street lamps, powered by Warpstone-laced gasses, lend the place a constant eldritch glow. The streets, passages, and byways of the Skaven capital are constantly swollen with warm

bodies, and the crowding of the populace is nearing the point where it will soon become unbearable.

Adventure Hook

A powerful artefact, the Horned One's Claw, has been stolen from the Grey Seers in Skavenblight. No one knows for certain who took the Claw, but the signs point to someone with intimate knowledge of the Grey Seers' compound. Is the perpetrator one of Clan Eshin's Night Runners, as some suspect, or is it one of the Grey Seers themselves?

Under-Altdorf

Location: Beneath the Imperial capital of Altdorf.
Population: 120,000, including captive labourers
Industries of Note: Altdorf's high Human population allows for abductions in the seedier parts of town, making the city a prime spot for harvesting captive labour. Skaven clans in Under-Altdorf, especially Clan Skaul, supplement their economics by trading drugs to Human merchants and smugglers. The graft and political excess in the Empire's capital allow the Skaven to employ, blackmail, and control human politicians quite easily.
Major Clan Affiliations: Skryre (33%), Eshin (28%), Moulder (15%), Pestilens (12%), Skabb (6%), Mors (4%), Skaul (3%)

The city beneath Altdorf boasts one of the largest Skaven populations in the Under-Empire, but the lack of available Warpstone ensures that it will never rival Skavenblight as the Skaven's greatest city. Control of Under-Altdorf is split between several clans, with Skryre holding the lion's share of power. For more information on Altdorf, see *Spires of Altdorf* and *Sigmar's Heirs*.

Adventure Hook

A prominent statesman's opponents are leaving Altdorf's political arena, and those that don't are often found dead if they are found at all. Clues point to a mysterious informant who meets with the statesman on a regular basis. Could this informant be one of the mysterious Ratmen, and what will the statesman do to keep his secret from his political rivals and peers?

— Sample Settlement —

The warren beneath the Imperial town of Delberz, midway between Altdorf and Middenheim, is a hub of activity for Ratmen on the move. Even without its prominence as a way station, however, Delberz is a valuable source of food, slaves, and material, all stolen from the Human city's docks above. A complete accounting of Delberz is given here, along with major sights and places of note.

Under-Delberz

Location: Beneath the Imperial town of Delberz.
Population: 10,000
Industries of Note: The recent influx of refugees has made Delberz a prime source of slaves, captive labour, and living subjects for Clan Moulder's experimentation. As the largest settlement along the subterranean byway between Middenheim and Altdorf, Delberz is also a source of food and rest for Skaven travellers of all clans.
Major Clan Affiliations: Moulder (19%), Eshin (16%), Skryre (14%), Mors (11%), Pestilens (11%), Skab (10%), Sleekit (10%), Skaar (6%), others (3% combined).

Under-Delberz is a major stopping point for Skaven who are travelling between Middenheim and Altdorf. It is also a major military staging point for the troops of clans Moulder, Skryre, Mors, and Skab. Given its high concentration of Clanrats and Stormvermin, Under-Delberz is seldom a peaceful place for the Skaven that are permanently housed there. Clan Skryre and Clan Mors, especially, have recently taken to fighting in the streets, and only the intervention of the Grey Seers has kept the violence from escalating into open clan warfare.

Adventure Hook

A rash of brutal murders amongst the Human refugees of Delberz is being attributed to a huge, rat-like creature that comes out to hunt after dark. Most likely a Rat Ogre, the beast is liable to attract unwanted attention to the Skaven settlement if it is caught or killed by town guardsmen, mercenaries, or adventurers.

Squeak-Kill Burrow

Many of the settlement's native burrows have been appropriated to serve as quarters for Clanrats that are passing through. In periods of overcrowding, which is most of the time, troops from different clans are housed together in the same burrows. The Council of Elders does its best to keep from housing hostile units with one another, but such things do occur from time to time.

The Squeak-Kill Burrows are typically overcrowded, defiled, and painted with Skaven leavings. Hundreds of Skaven troops are forced to sleep atop one another in great, reeking putrescent piles. Dung and muck are rampant here, and the filth is typically crushed under foot until it is completely mixed with the soft dirt and mud of the chambers' floors. The lowliest Skaven Clanrats are forced to sleep atop this mire and beneath the other Skaven, acting as living mattresses and pillows for their superiors.

Breeding Pits

As with most Skaven communities, the most heavily guarded areas in Under-Delberz are its breeding pits, the lairs of the female Skaven, whose sole purpose are to spawn endless litters of Skaven. The tunnels and chambers are constantly patrolled by the warren's militia. Breeding females can only be accessed by those Skaven who are strong and affluent enough to do so, as well as those few males who are allowed to husband. The halls and chambers of Under-Delberz' Breeding Pits are quiet and dark, and not quite as filthy as the rest of the warren. This has more to do with the area's lessened foot traffic than with any effort toward sanitation on the part of the Skaven.

The Ratwives, as they are known, are selected from Skaven who are too weak to fight or perform hard labour, but who show a predilection for the healing arts and the application of narcotics. Each is emasculated prior to being allowed within the Breeding Pits, which prevents them from taking advantage of their nearness to breeding females. Being made into one of "the cut" is certainly no honour and is feared more than becoming a slave.

Master-Leader Nests

Every Clan with some manner of influence in Under-Delberz is allowed to staff a Master-Leader Nest within the town. Small embassies of a sort, they are almost like small strongholds or bunkers, each one accorded to its respective Clan as if it were that Clan's property. The legation burrows are constructed differently from one another, but they are all of similar size and capacity. Clan dignitaries are expected to stay within the Clan Nests, as opposed to either the Squeak-Kill Burrows or the Things-Place.

Great Clan Master-Leader Nests

Each of the Great Clans staffs a permanent Great Clan Master-Leader Nest in Under-Delberz, and each location reflects the values and aesthetics of the group. These are heavily guarded by Stormvermin and Clanrats, who happily butcher anyone they don't recognise.

Clan Eshin's Master-Leader Nest is subdued and dimly lit. Non-Eshin are not permitted to enter on pain of death. There are no visible sentries guarding the entrance, but that is no indication that security is not present. On the contrary, Clan Eshin's guards are never seen if they are successful, even when they are killing an intruder. At least one Assassin dwells within Eshin's Master-Leader Nest, but he is only seen when he desires it.

The Master-Leader Nest of Clan Moulder is most conspicuous for its guards: a pair of large, aggressive, and dim-witted Rat Ogres. These beasts guard the legation's entrance, secured to the chamber's walls by several thin chains. Anyone who attempts entrance into Moulder's Master-Leader Nest is at risk of being torn to pieces by the two creatures unless they are escorted by a recognized representative of Clan Moulder.

Like Clan Eshin's Master-Leader Nest, the legation of Clan Pestilens seems to lack living security of any kind. Despite this seeming defencelessness, Pestilens' facilities are rarely visited by anyone but Plague Monks and the other diseased members of the clan. Fear of disease is the largest reason for the lack of visitors, and the horrid stench that emanates from the Master-Leader Nest's chambers does nothing to divest potential guests of their anxieties.

Of the Great Clans' Master-Leader Nests, Clan Skryre's is the most visually inspiring. A great arc of green warp energy, seemingly drawn from within the legation itself, crackles continuously between two poles that are set above the facility's doors, while chittering Skryre engineers come and go at all hours. Unwelcome guests have been known to be turned into piles of ash for their trespasses, making the light show that much more intimidating.

Warlord Clan Master-Leader Nests

Only four of the Warlord Clans have secured enough influence in Under-Delberz to warrant their own Master-Leader Nests. Specifically, these are Clans Mors, Skaar, Skab, and Sleekit. Compared to the Master-Leader Nests afforded to the Great Clans, the legations of the Warlord Clans are ramshackle and tiny. Their staffs are correspondingly small, and the amenities are few and far between. Other Warlord Clans are not permitted to staff Master-Leader Nests within Delberz, partly because there are no facilities currently available for them to do so. However, any Warlord Clan willing to bribe the Council of Elders sufficiently can secure its own Master-Leader Nest.

Clan Mors has recently acquired a Master-Leader Nest in Under-Delberz, financed by the Clan's recent financial and martial victories. It is perhaps the largest of the Warlord Clan Master-Leader Nests in Under-Delberz, though the extent of its construction is known only to Mors' leadership. Mors keeps several visible guards at the entrance, as much to intimidate troublemakers as to maintain its visibility as a martial power.

Much of the mining and excavation in and around Under-Delberz is associated with Clan Skaar, which gives the Clan more influence in Under-Delberz than its percentage of the population might suggest. The secrets of the city above are well-known to Skaar's administrators, and the Clan is said to continuously build secret entrances and tunnels that connect to the town's most secure chambers.

Like Mors, Clan Skab keeps a squad of highly-trained, black-furred Stormvermin on staff within its Master-Leader Nest. These brutes accost anyone passing, and have earned a reputation for senseless brutality. Few Skaven knowingly pass very close to Clan Skab's legation unless they have official business with the clan, and this seems to suit the clan's elders.

Because Sleekit maintains a large contingent of 'river rats' in the city of Under-Delberz, the clan has been accorded a tiny Master-Leader Nest near the docks. Exhibiting none of the security, either expressed or implied, of the other Master-Leader Nests, Clan Sleekit's is more like a Skaven import/export company. For a price, Sleekit's boats can be leased and its crews hired to transport anyone or anything to just about anywhere in the Under-Empire that connects to a waterway.

Dreg Pile

The common districts, otherwise known as the Dreg Pile, are home to Skaven workers who are citizens of Under-Delberz. Regardless of their respective clans, the common Skaven of Under-Delberz are the ones that keep the warren's economy booming. Though it may indeed be a military staging area, Skaven civilians are predominant in the town's population, making the Dreg Pile one of the largest districts.

Though the Dreg Pile exhibits no specific architectural quirks, and to all eyes appears to be a typical Skaven burg, it is nonetheless well-constructed. The scent of feculence reflects the values and markings of its thousands of residents, giving them comfort for all its defilement. The streets are narrow and paved with rough cobblestones. Skaven merchants set up tables and

The Warren of Under-Delberz

From the Desk of Sigo Benetele, Magister of the Light Order

Magister Fischer,

I obtained the included artefacts from a merchant near
He claimed to have bought them not more than two wee
from a Strigany houseboat moored on the River Del
course, knowing of my fascination with esoterica and gre
oddities, he immediately gifted them to me without any

I'll admit that the items confuse me greatly. The metal o
are clearly weapons of some sort, although I doubt they wo
of much practical use. It is the skin that is the primary so
my befuddlement. Clearly, it is a crude map. Although
imagine where it depicts. I have compared it to all th
have secured during my long years of travel and pon
upon my travel journals, but I am still no wiser.

And that language. What it? Have I, against all od
stumbled upon a discarded m drawn by the Northern
recently found by a Strigany f. We now know that they had
great numbers, but never in m est dreams did I consider that
they may have towns, or even c ut the symbols, they certainly
appear barbaric enough for the Kurgan!

Thus, as always, I entrust th o you. Uncover what you
can of their origin, and I sh ard you well. If they prove to
be inappropriate for priva nership, I'm sure tho
will recompense my esta ppropriately.

Yours, with faith and sincerity,

Lord Otto von Siert

Order of Pr orities

1) Compare on R
for HM; secure access to the Ancient L h 'Rat
2) Contact VK to confirm FR's claims; raise renen's
Five Proofs of Non-Aethyria to counter his Chad All positio
3) Research life and influences of Leiber. Ref: LR TVK.
4) Send agents to investigate Watch Reports fro elberz of a
'cloaked man' who was shot and vanished near a Strigany Caravan
3 weeks ago. There is a possible connection to von Siert's story here.

If they face your Light, they will have Shadow at their back.

tes on the Siert
High Chorister,
My master once told me: "Beware the Grey who bears gifts". Now, I know what he meant.
I received the enclosed artefacts from Markus Fischer, a Magister of some reputation in the Grey Order. He made some vague remarks about "Beastmen of the city," and that we should look into
tter. It was clear that he knew something,
't willing to divulge to me exactly what.
mination, some of the markings were
f various blasphemous tongues I have
texts of
Patriarch agrees with
ing task, and one that we
ediately.
truth behind these curious
has suggested I provide you
's 'The Loathsome Ratmen,
Vile Kin', although why he
ancient tome of conspiratorial
able escapes me.
Rauschone
etal weapons
stern in
that I
anslation is
mall dots on my map
esent Master-Leader Nests
ans that are situated in the Warren.
Are these like city districts?
Black River
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
N
Docks & Sleekit Dreg Pile
Squeak-Kill
Mors Dreg Pile
Thing Killer HQ
Eshin Dreg Pile
Skrawl Market
7. Big Squeak
8. High Council
9. Skaar Dreg Pile
10. The Wheel
11. Skab Dreg Pile
12. Pestilens Dreg Pile
13. Horned Rat Temple
14. Slave Pens
15. Moulder Dreg Pile
16. Skryre Dreg Pile
17. Whelp Pits
18. Breeding Pits
As long as there is Light, there will be Darkness.

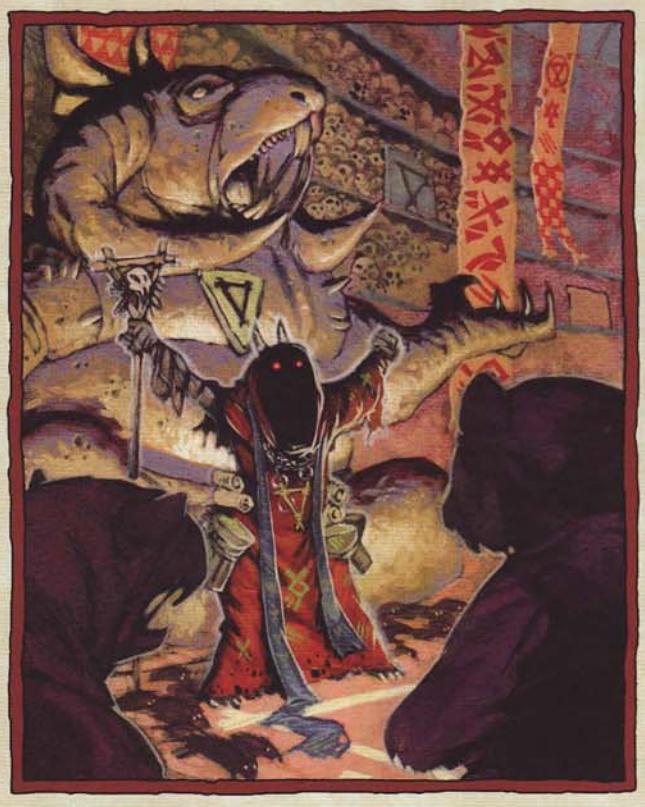
hawk their merchandise both day and night. Dead end alleys are widespread, with many cul-de-sacs serving as makeshift housing.

Typical living conditions for the citizens of Under-Delberz are based first on clan, and secondly on family. Birthkin tend to stick together, nesting with one another throughout their relatively short lives. The Commons is subdivided into rough districts based upon clan predominance in the area. Conditions are often peaceful, even between members of competing clans, but relationships often become strained during times of war. Riots are not at all uncommon during such periods.

Most High Grand Council

The Most High Grand Council consists of 11 leaders who are elected from amongst the most venerable and wise Skaven in Under-Delberz. Most High Grand Council elections are not public, and are instead held behind closed doors. The specifics of their procedures are unknown, but involve a vast amount of corruption, graft, and underhanded scheming. Elections are held whenever a Councilmember dies or vanishes, an event which is all too common. The Most High Grand Council majority is affiliated with Clan Moulder, and there is no other Clan that dominates the proceedings to the same extent.

The chambers are adjacent to the Big Squeak. The long, low balcony protruding into the Big Squeak serves the elders as an elevated podium where they preside over matters of great importance. Bodyguards of all kinds are a familiar sight in and around the Council, and each elder keeps at least two on retainer at any one time. Bodyguards and security are not permitted to enter the Most High Grand Council chambers during deliberation, however, and it is no surprise that heated debates are the most common catalysts for an elder's death.



Outside of the Master-Leader Nests of the Great Clans and the breeding pits, the Most High Grand Council is perhaps the single most well-protected and secure structure in all of Under-Delberz. The entrances and exits are secured by rusted iron gates, and the Clanrats of the warren militia patrol the halls continuously in small groups. The gates are rarely opened to anyone unless they are members of the Council or delegates from the Master-Leader Nests. Anyone who is caught within the Most High Grand Council chambers without cause is executed on the spot.

Docks

The docks extend along the banks of the River Black, which mirrors the movements of the River Delb on the surface. Clan Sleekit controls the docks, and they manage to do a fair amount of business ferrying goods and individuals up and down the river. There are always several boats and skiffs moored at the wharves, most of them barely sea-worthy. The fact that Sleekit's boatmen can sail such rickety craft is testament to their skill with oar, paddle, and pole.

The stone wharves that make up Under-Delberz's docks are old, crumbling, and worn down by centuries of running water. They grow shorter and shorter each year as the River Black consumes them. The air is fresher near the docks, stirred by a moist, cool breeze that follows the waterway in its southern course. Blind fish, as well as other unknown things, swim in the river's currents, sometimes splashing at the surface in a flash of white scales.

Big Squeak

The Big Squeak is the great town square of Under-Delberz. On most days, the Big Squeak is merely a gathering place for Skaven in their normal comings and goings. Newsqueakers, the town criers of Under-Delberz, scurry amongst the omnipresent crowds, spreading information, rumours, and gossip by word of mouth. Theft is a constant threat, as are beatings and the occasional brawl as Skaven contend with one another for status and even up old scores.

When civic announcements must be made, the Big Squeak is where they are given. Other civic events, the most common of which are executions, are also performed in the Big Squeak. The Most High Grand Council oversees many of these events from its balcony, which is raised above the rabble that scurries and creeps about the Big Squeak. A well, which is no more than a wide, dark pit, dominates the area's centre. Few Skaven dare venture too close, and there are rumours that horrible, slimy things live within its depths.

Skrawl Market

The Skrawl Market is little more than a series of twisting, maze-like tunnels punctuated by numerous stalls, shops, and awnings. Skaven merchants hawk their wares, which include everything from Warpstone incense to Halfling 'pets' to lowly Skaven slaves. Nearly anything can be bought within the Market, for a price. Though it lacks the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the larger markets in Under-Altdorf, Skavenblight, or Hell Pit, Under-Delberz's marketplace is still an excellent source for goods and services.

Most of Under-Delberz's citizens perform their daily shopping here, haggling in high-pitched squeaks and shrill, obscenity-laced verbiage. Even clan affiliation is not enough to stem the constant squabbling that breaks out within the market. To both the Skaven who sell their wares and to those that buy them, haggling is yet another form of survival and one-upmanship. Getting the better part of any deal, either by bargaining or blatant larceny, is a noble goal to the Skaven.

Thing-Killer Headquarters

The headquarters of the warren Clanrats is adjacent to the Most High Grand Council. Aside from its administrative offices, this area also houses the warren's dungeons and barracks. The structure is in poor repair, having suffered from a series of riots several years ago which resulted in the violent deaths of most of the militia's Clanrats. Things have improved for the militia's troops since then, but the vandalism remains behind as a stark reminder that the warren's citizens possess their own form of authority.

The militia is a shoddily-trained and ill-disciplined fighting force, yet it performs its duties admirably despite its many failings. Few of the warren's citizens willingly face the Clanrats on an individual basis, which makes achieving a position within the Thing-Killers a lofty goal for any Skaven who wants to garner some cheap authority. Although such a course suits many Skaven thugs, the mortality rate in the militia is extraordinarily high due to a combination of in-fighting and angry citizen gangs.

Whelp Pits

These dark and squalid chambers, located near the breeding pits, are where Skaven young are raised. There are few amenities here, for Skaven children are considered to be worthless unless they are special in some way. Black-furred Stormvermin or white-furred Grey Seers are taken from their birthkin at once, while their unremarkable siblings are relegated to the confines of the nurseries until they are old enough to fend for themselves.

When a male Skaven is born, he and his birthkin are shuttled to the whelp pits by the Ratwives. There they are separated based on their father's clan and placed into crèches. Fed on blood-laced milk, they grow fast and are quick to learn the ways of survival amongst their peers. Many do not survive, and their bodies are devoured hungrily by their brothers.

Slave Pens

A large contingent of slaves and captive labourers are considered to be the property of the city as a whole, and are used by the authorities in any way that suits them. Civic projects are often built on the blood and toil of these unfortunates, who spend what little free time they are permitted resting in Under-Delberz's slave pens. The slave pens are perhaps the vilest portion of the city. Even the Skaven, who are normally acclimatized to refuse and excrement, have a hard time ignoring the nauseating stench of the hundreds of captives kept penned in and unwashed for weeks and months at a time. Slaves are caged in large groups, regardless of their species. Skaven slaves are treated no differently than are Dwarf, Elf, or Human slaves. Overseers, armed with whips and cudgels, maintain a draconian order over the entire area. Even so, deaths in the slave pens due to mistreatment are a rarity, as each slave represents at least some miniscule investment of time and Warp Tokens. It is far more common for slaves to be worked to death than to be killed by an overseer's beating.

Temple of the Horned Rat

As in most other Under-Empire settlements, the Skaven of Under-Delberz fervently worship the Horned Rat. It is no surprise that the Temple of the Horned Rat is one of the largest and most imposing structures in the community. The premises are maintained by the Grey Seers and their entourage. Prayer services are held constantly, and consist of sermons, sacrifices, and vulgar displays of warp magic that are designed to keep the populace in line.

Both the interior and exterior walls of the temple are adorned with strips of jagged metal, shards of black glass, and Warpstone-tinged effigies. The spires climb high, and the tallest of these is tipped with a large bell that is rung upon the thirteenth hour each day. While elite guards and Rat Ogres are constantly visible within the confines of the temple, the Grey Seers and their magic represent the single greatest threat to intruders. No one is certain how many Grey Seers call the temple their home, though the total is probably close to a dozen, all told.

The Grey Seers spend much of their time administering to the spiritual welfare of the warren's citizens. They wander the streets alone or in small groups, searching for anyone who is obviously acting out against the will of the Horned God. Violators are captured and returned to the temple for cleansing. The cleansing procedure varies depending on the severity of the perpetrator's religious crimes. In many cases, heretics are judged harshly and end up on the Horned Rat's altar before a throng of chanting adherents.

Slave-Things-Place

The Slave-Things-Place is where travellers and itinerants can find a place to rest. This is sometimes easier said than done, as the best spots are almost always taken, and fights to claim them are constantly breaking out. Privacy, in the form of common rooms and the occasional secluded den, can be bought for the right price. Hostels, which provide semi-permanent housing, are also in high demand. Food of all kinds can be purchased in the transient district at nearly any time of the night or day.

The central road in the Slave-Things-Place loops in from Under-Delberz's north gate, making a wide sweep of the area before returning to the gate. Referred to as the Wheel by the citizenry, this avenue is where caravans from the far ends of the Under-Empire come to offload their wares. Trading here is even more cutthroat than it is in the warren's market. The militia fails to patrol the Slave-Things-Place, preferring to leave the foreigners to their own devices.

— Warbands —

Warbands are the essential component of Skaven forces. Each warband is made up of several different types of units that work in unison to complete whatever military objective is assigned to them. To create a random warband, roll 1d10 times on **Table 5–2: Random Skaven Units**. To generate individual Skaven encounters, just roll once. See *Old World Bestiary* and **Appendix: Sample Skaven Characters** for details.

Sample Skaven Warband

What follows is a sample Warband generated using **Table 5–2: Random Skaven Units**.

Skrink's Verminous Horde

Warlord Skrink has assembled a small Warband in order to wipe out a neighbouring clan's stronghold. He has enlisted scouts from Clan Eshin to probe his enemy's defences. He has also hired one of Clan Mors' experienced attack teams to provide his own assault team with much-needed back-up. Most of the Warlord's Warpstone, however, was spent on the coup de grace: one of Clan Moulder's heavy assault teams, backed up by a Master Moulder and his entourage. With such a selection of troops at his fingertips, he finds the prospect of losing to be all but unthinkable.

The exact type and number of units in Skrink's Horde are as follows:

Skaven Assault Team (1 Clawleader, 7 Stormvermin)
Skaven Warrior Band 1 (1 Clawleader, 2 Stormvermin, 12 Clanrats)
Skaven Warrior Band 2 (1 Clawleader, 2 Stormvermin, 9 Clanrats)
Clan Eshin: Scouts (2 Gutter Runners, 5 Night Runners)
Clan Mors: Attack Team (1 Clawleader, 8 Stormvermin, 6 Clanrats)
Clan Moulder: Heavy Assault Team (2 Packmasters, 4 Rat Ogres, 8 Clanrats)
Clan Moulder: Master Moulder and Entourage (1 Master Moulder, 1 Packmaster, 2 Rat Ogres, 8 Stormvermin, and 6 Clanrats)

Table 5–2: Random Skaven Units

Roll	Encounter Type	Number Encountered
01	Skaven Commander and Entourage	1 Clan Chieftain, 2 Clawleaders, 1 Grey Seer, 1d10 Stormvermin
02	Grey Seer and Entourage	1 Grey Seer, 3 Apprentice Grey Seers, 1 Rat Ogre, 1d10 Stormvermin
03–08	Skaven Assault Team	1 Clawleader, 2d10 Stormvermin
09–15	Skaven Scouts	1 Skirmisher, 1d10 Clanrats
16–22	Skaven Warriors	1 Clawleader, 2 Stormvermin, 2d10 Clanrats
23–28	Slave Work Team	2 Clanrats, 3d10 Slaves
29–30	Clan Eshin: Assassination Team	1 Master Assassin, 2 Gutter Runners, 1d10 Night Runners
31–37	Clan Eshin: Scouts	2 Gutter Runners, 1d10/2 Night Runners
38–44	Clan Eshin: Fast Attack Squad	1d10 Gutter Runners
45–51	Clan Mors: Attack Team	1 Clawleader, 1d10/2 Stormvermin, 1d10+5 Clanrats
52–56	Clan Mors: Sneaks	1d10 Skaven Thieves
57–62	Clan Moulder: Heavy Assault Team	2 Packmasters, 4 Rat Ogres, 1d10 Giant Rats
63–64	Clan Moulder: Master Moulder and Entourage	1 Master Moulder, 1 Packmaster, 2 Rat Ogres, 1d10 Stormvermin, 1d10 Clanrats
65–71	Clan Moulder: Rat Pack	2 Packmasters, 2d10 Giant Rats
72–77	Clan Pestilens: Censer Bearers	2 Censer Bearers, 1d10 Plague Monks
78–84	Clan Pestilens: Plague Monks	2d10 Plague Monks
85–86	Clan Pestilens: Plague Priest and Entourage	1 Plague Priest, 2 Plague Deacons, 2 Censer Bearers, 1d10 Plague Monks
87–91	Clan Skryre: Heavy Weapons Team	2 Skirmishers, 1d10 Clanrats
92–98	Clan Skryre: Jezzail Team	1d10 Skirmishers
99	Clan Skryre: Globadiers	1d10 Skirmishers
00	Clan Skryre: Warlock Engineer and Entourage	1 Warlock Engineer, 4 Stormvermin, 1d10 Skirmishers

Custom Skaven Clans

While warbands may be the lifeblood of any Skaven army, they are still controlled by large Skaven Clans. There are only four Great Clans, but there are literally thousands of Lesser, or Warlord, Clans in the Under-Empire. It is beyond the scope of any volume to name and detail each of the Warlord Clans, so a number of tables have been provided to allow you to build one of your own by providing the essential building blocks.

Roll on the following tables in order, and record your results as you go.

Clan Size

Every Clan is made up of a number of individuals. A Clan's population gives a general idea of its power and influence within Skaven society. Smaller Clans, with less than a thousand members, are typically struggling to survive, while larger Clans, which may encompass hundreds of thousands of Skaven, are always looking for less powerful clans to feed upon.

To determine a clan's size, roll on **Table 5–3: Clan Size**. To determine the Clan's estimated population, roll the dice as indicated by the entry that you've generated.

Table 5–3: Clan Size

Roll	Clan Population
1–2	100–1,000 Skaven (1d10 × 100)
3–4	1,000–10,000 Skaven (1d10 × 1,000)
5–7	10,000–100,000 Skaven (1d10 × 10,000)
8–9	100,000–1,000,000 Skaven (1d10 × 100,000)
10	1,000,000+ Skaven (1d10 × 100,000 + 1,000,000)

Table 5–4: Clan Influence

Roll	Result
1 or less	None; All but extinct
2–3	Shunned
4–5	Low
6–8	Moderate
9	High
10 or more	Excellent

Clan Influence

Each of the many Warlord Clans has a certain amount of influence and respect in the Under-Empire. To determine how the clan stands in the eyes of its peers, roll on **Table 5–4: Clan Influence**. Clans with less than 10,000 members take a –1 penalty to rolls on this table, while clans with more than 100,000 members add a +1 bonus to rolls on this table.

Clan influence can change radically depending on the clan's actions, population, and reputation. There are no hard and fast rules for determining a shift in a clan's influence, and the Game Master is the final arbiter of such things.

The following describe the effects of a clan's influence.

- **None:** This clan has no standing within Skaven society, and is not even known of by most of its peers. Perhaps the clan was recently formed, or was previously lost to the Under-Empire, only to be rediscovered.
- **Shunned:** This clan is actively spurned and ridiculed by its peers. Due to some past transgression, or because of a broad racial stereotype, this clan is seen as beneath reproach. The other Warlord Clans never admit to dealing with this clan, unless they mean to destroy it out of hand.
- **Low:** This clan's standing in the eyes of the Skaven is low. The clan is not well-respected, and is seen as little more than a potential target of opportunity. The other Warlord Clans quietly watch this clan, waiting for a chance to strike and strip it of its holdings.
- **Moderate:** This clan's standing within Skaven society is about average. The clan is treated with cautious respect by its peers, though any display of weakness on its part doubtless will cause its standing to diminish immensely.
- **High:** This clan's standing within Skaven society is high. Most of the Warlord Clans view them it respect, and they envy its perceived prestige.
- **Excellent:** This clan's standing within Skaven society is only exceeded by those Warlord Clans that have seats on the Council of Thirteen. All Warlord Clans treat the clan with fawning respect, hoping to avoid its wrath if they cannot instead cultivate its favour.

Clan Settlements

In addition to its size and standing, a clan is also judged based on the number of settlements it controls. Most clans have at least a single stronghold to its name, though some of the weakest have no holdings to speak of. These sad few cling to life in whatever Skaven settlements allow them to take root. To determine the number of settlements that a clan controls, roll on **Table 5–5: Clan Settlements**. Apply the following modifiers based on the clan's Influence: None –4, Shunned –2, Low –1, Moderate +0, High +1, Excellent +2.

The following describe the effects of a clan's settlements.

- **Vagabonds:** This clan is one of the few vagabond clans; that is, Warlord Clans with no settlements to speak of. They wander the Under-Empire endlessly in nomadic groups, and are generally despised by their peers.
- **No Holdings:** This clan is one of the rare few that has no holdings whatsoever in the Under-Empire. The clan population is scattered throughout the settlements of the other clans.

Table 5–5: Clan Settlements

Roll	Result
1 or less	Vagabonds
2	No Holdings
3–4	One Holding
5–7	Modest Holdings
8–9	Rich Holdings
10 or more	Vast Holdings

Table 5–6: Clan Traits

Roll	Traits
1	Bestial
2	Berserker
3	Charming
4	Diseased
5	Intelligent
6	Magically Attuned
7	Martial
8	Swift
9	Technological
10	Warped

- **One Holding:** This clan possesses a single stronghold, from which it controls 1d10 nests.
- **Modest Holdings:** This clan possesses at least one stronghold, and controls 2d10 nests. In addition, the clan has control of at least one moderately-sized warren.
- **Rich Holdings:** This clan possesses a well-established and defensible stronghold, as well as a number of nests and 1d10 warrens within the local area. Additionally, it has some measure of power in at least one major Skaven city.
- **Vast Holdings:** This clan possesses multiple strongholds and associated nests, as well as 2d10 warrens. Members of this clan have influence in the local governments of several major Skaven cities.

Clan Talents

Nearly every clan has something to set it apart from its peers. In many cases, this is some manner of specialty or talent that the clan has evolved over time. When generating a random clan, roll or choose a result on **Table 5–6: Clan Traits**.

The following describe the effects of a clan's traits.

- **Bestial:** This clan trains, modifies, and utilises living creatures for war or industry. These Skaven gain a +5% bonus to Animal Care and Animal Training tests.
- **Berserker:** Members of this clan can enter a bloody rage. These Skaven gain the Frenzy Talent.
- **Charming:** Members of this clan are good at games of intrigue and deception. These Skaven gain the Schemer Talent.
- **Diseased:** This clan is particularly attuned to disease, pestilence, and plague. These Skaven gain the Resistance to Disease Talent.
- **Intelligent:** Members of this clan are particularly intelligent. These Skaven gain the Savvy Talent.
- **Magically Attuned:** This clan is well-known for its members' ability to harness magical power. These Skaven gain the Aethyric Attunement Talent.
- **Martial:** This clan is particularly adept at military manoeuvres, strategy, and tactics. These Skaven gain the Warrior Born Talent.
- **Swift:** The Skaven of this clan are incredibly quick on their feet. These Skaven gain the Fleet Footed Talent.
- **Technological:** Members of this clan can meld sorcery and engineering into terrible artifice. These Skaven gain Trade (Engineering).
- **Warped:** This clan is known for its heavy exposure to Warpstone. These Skaven gain a random mutation.

Sample Skaven Clan

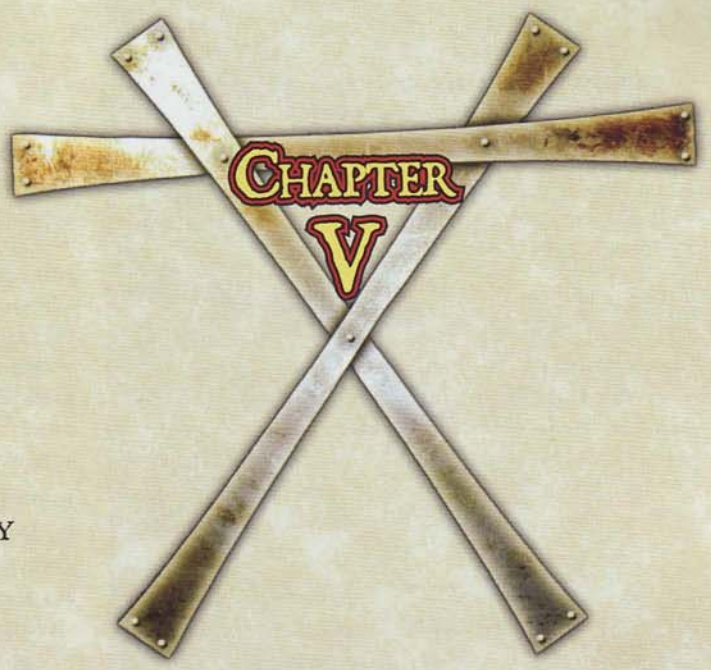
Presented here is a sample Skaven clan, generated using the tables in this chapter.

Clan Vectab

Clan Name: Vectab
Clan Population: 4,000 Skaven
Clan Influence: Low
Clan Settlements: Few holdings; 1 stronghold, 2 nests
Clan Talent: Martial

Clan Vectab is one of the smaller Warlord Clans. Though it lacks the respect of its peers, Vectab manages to maintain its own small slice of the Under-Empire through sheer force of arms. Indeed, the clan is made up of born warriors, and even the Slaves filling its ranks are of above average skill in fighting. Regardless of its members' battle prowess, Clan Vectab's days are surely numbered unless it can secure a more stable position within Skaven society.

Skaven Warfare



"I'm not sure what those things were, but they fought like cornered...err..."

—Josef Schneidling, Mercenary

"Kill-kill, quick-quick!"

—Skaven battle cry

Warfare is an integral part of the Skaven psyche. They must wage wars, or else they risk the starvation of their entire race. Their innate fecundity demands it, as they breed quickly and with abandon. As the warrens and nests of the Under-Empire grow ever more crowded with these loathsome Ratmen, the musk of battle grows ever stronger in their nostrils. In such times, the Skaven become aggressive, snapping at one another in rage without any provocation.

When these circumstances reach a critical point, the Skaven either go to war against one another, engaging in an orgy of self-destructive slaughter, or work to conquer the surface world that lies beyond their subterranean realm. The Skaven believe that ultimate victory over the the surface dwellers is only a matter of time, and that when they are finally deserving of triumph, the Horned Rat will grant them the spoils they so richly deserve.

— Prey —

The Skaven view the world from a predator's perspective, seeing all the creatures beneath the sun and moon either as potential tools or eventual victims. Their rapacious nature is focused on their own kind just as often as it is fixed upon the inhabitants of the surface world. It comes as little surprise that the Skaven favour the weak as prey, above all other targets. This is due to the fact that their culture is based on survival of the fittest, and only the strong can succeed for any length of time. To the Skaven, the weak exist to justify the strong. For those Skaven who seek to undermine the rightful status of individuals who occupy positions of leadership within the clans, the weak provide a necessary contrast, helping each Ratman to judge his peers in the ever-changing hierarchy of Skaven society.

When they are not preying on one another, the Skaven turn their gaze to the denizens of the surface world. Much of the time, Skaven see Humans, Dwarfs, Elves, and their ilk as targets of opportunity. Skaven raiding parties are sent to retrieve food, prisoners, and valuables from settlements on the surface, supplementing the Skaven workforce and providing valuable comestibles for the discerning Ratman palate. Not only are prisoners used for labour; many are given to the Horned Rat in ritual sacrifices, while others are slaughtered like cattle and used to feed the teeming masses of the Under-Empire.

— Tactics —

The Skaven are masters of stealth, treachery, and intrigue. This is not just something they train in casually. Skill at these types of things is simply matter of survival of the cutthroat world of Skaven society. The day to day existence of the average Clanrat is filled with more double-dealing, conspiracy, and deception than one can possibly imagine. Given the state of affairs within the Under-Empire, it is little surprise that the lessons they learn struggling for position and prestige amongst their own hordes are put to good use against the rest of the world.

Fear

"For I cannot forget the revulsion I felt upon seeing those flayed bodies rotting in the sunlight on the morrow, nor can I repress the memory of the rat-things beneath the gibbous moon the eve before. That these creatures wrought such horror before my very eyes, willingly and with relish, is far less frightening to me now than the fact that no one will believe my tale."

—Harad van Kolste, Merchant

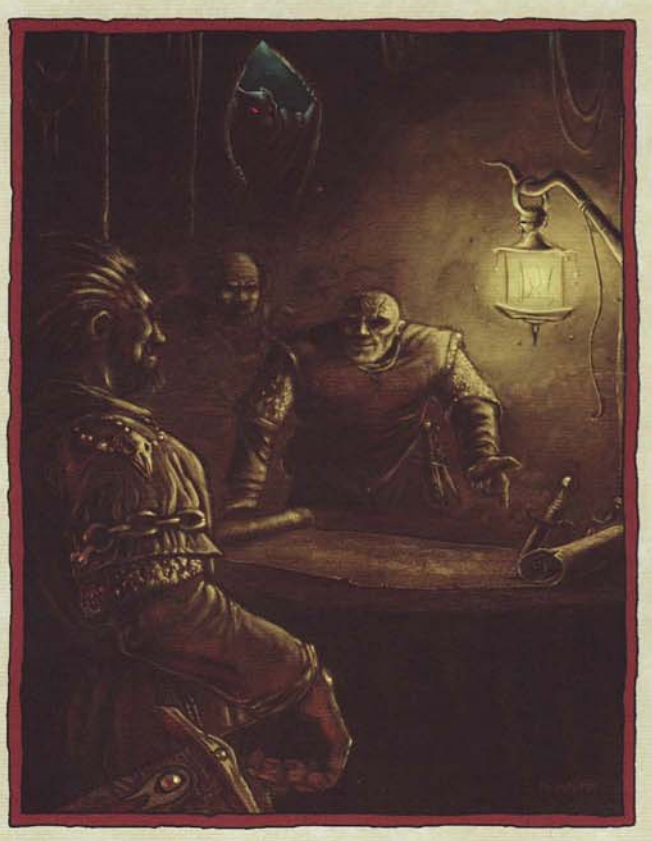
In 2387 IC, the Skaven were betrayed by Prince Karsten of Waldenhof, a Human pawn they had been cultivating as an ally for many years. In retribution for Karsten's audacity, the Skaven attacked the town of Waldenhof and stole away with each and every child that lived within the city walls. The very horror and grief such an act can cause in an enemy is itself a powerful weapon, and one the Skaven have grown quite adept at utilising.

The tactic of fear is a hallmark of the Ratmen. By committing atrocities and other reprehensible acts against their enemies, the Skaven cultivate a fearsome presence in the minds of their foes. When these horrible deeds are accomplished in such a way that they are only discovered after the fact, the horror that results is multiplied ten fold. The Skaven feel that it is only proper to demoralize an enemy through liberal use of fear.

Intelligence

"I feel the eyes upon me wherever I go. I cannot shake the notion that I am being followed. As I lay in my bed at night, I can hear the sound of claws upon the tiles of my roof. It is as if everything I do, every word I speak, is being marked."

—Fransesca Diorgino, Tilean Diplomat



The Skaven are inimitable spies. They have eyes and ears everywhere, hidden in the teeming metropolises of the Empire. This intelligence network is used to excellent effect, and gathered information is traded for Warpstone or used to blackmail men the Ratmen wish to use for their own ends. Blackmail is crucial to the measure of control the Skaven have over Human pawns and politicians. Information gathered within the darkest recesses of Imperial cities is oftentimes particularly damning to those men who hold the reins of power. In the Old World, there are few people with secrets that they wouldn't rather have buried and forgotten.

Beyond the obvious political uses for intelligence gathering, the Skaven also desire to keep an attentive eye upon the troop movements of their enemies. When an armed force of any appreciable size mobilizes in or near a major Imperial settlement, you can be sure that the Skaven already know about it. The Skaven remain mindful of the scope of such operations, seeking to take advantage of a city's sudden defensive reduction. They are also adept at anticipating the movements of large troop formations and the Plague Monks of Clan Pestilens have been known to defile the food and water supplies that opposing armies will doubtless put to use as they advance upon their intended objectives.

Plague

"My patient is covered from head to toe in boils, each red and angry and filled with pus. His fever has remained steady, accompanied by violent chills. No remedy seems to relieve his suffering. I have not seen a disease of this kind before, nor do I hope to ever see one again. I recommend that the victim's body be incinerated once he expires, which, at the present rate, should be soon."

—Francois Martin, Physician

The Great Plague of 1111 IC is a prime example of disease used as a weapon by the Skaven. The Plague brought much of the Empire to its knees, paving the way for a Skaven incursion that has not been equalled in all the centuries since. Noble and peasant alike suffered as the virulent infection passed along trade routes, following in the wake of merchants and refugees. By the time the Skaven poured forth from their warrens, the glory of the Empire had already been reduced to a mere shadow of its former self.

Disease is one ally the Skaven are happy to embrace. Armour is useless against it. Weapons cannot destroy it. It spreads unseen, its methods of transmission misunderstood by most of the Empire's citizens. Given the dire state of hygiene in much of the Old World, little can be done to stem an epidemic. Once symptoms appear within a populace, it is usually too late to do much else but pray.

Clan Pestilens, which is well-known for using sickness as a weapon, has often been the harbinger of plague in the

Empire. Sudden outbreaks of disease in heavily-populated areas sometimes foreshadow a new Skaven advance. These diseases cause death and disability, worrying away at their victims in a slow, insidious manner. Even illnesses that do not cause immediate death can deny an opponent the full use of his forces on the field of battle. If infected units take to the field despite their diseased state, their effectiveness is invariably reduced.

Poison

"Subject is a Tilean female in her middle years. There are no signs of entry or struggle. The only evidence I can find that points to foul play is a black dart in her lower back. I'd bet my father's wooden teeth that the dart has been envenomed in some way."

—Johann Luther, Watchman

Poison is another weapon that is commonly employed by the Skaven. Though the Assassins of Clan Eshin remain the undisputed masters of all manner of poisons, all Skaven have some familiarity with its use. When properly used, a single dose of a terrible toxin, such as manticore spoor, can bring turmoil to an entire nation. Leaders of enemy forces are often the targets of Skaven assassins, as their deaths can easily cause discord and loss of morale amongst their subjects.

Slave Harvesting

"The village of Toldstadt is no longer there. Oh, the buildings, cottages, even the town well remain, but the folk that once walked the central avenue are gone. Their doors hang open, their suppers sit rotting upon mouldering trenchers, half-eaten, as if they had been interrupted by important guests even as they dined."

—Dolwen Featherbright, Elf Scout

The Skaven are a race that delights in the enslavement of others. Slaves of all kinds are at the bottom of the Skaven social order. The slaves of the Under-Empire perform duties that would demean even the lowest of Clanrats, such as food cultivation or mining operations. In times of religious furore, slaves are sacrificed to the Horned Rat by the thousands, their blood leaving crimson stains upon the pestilent altars of the Skaven.

On an individual level, each slave is an expendable asset to be used as his master sees fit. When clustered into large formations, the slaves of the Skaven are thrown pell-mell at enemy formations while their own troops riddle both sides with black arrows and poison wind globes. The bodies of these unfortunates are used as ramps by the Clanrats and Stormvermin that follow, climbed upon and crushed into pulp as the battle continues to rage around them.

Being that slaves are valuable commodities that are callously squandered by the Ratmen, it is often necessary for the Skaven to harvest new ones. In the Under-Empire, weaker clans that have been subjugated by stronger ones are enslaved to the last individual. When the Skaven are unable to take their own kind as slaves, raiding parties are instead sent into remote Human

settlements to take prisoners. Non-Skaven slaves are treated with even less dignity than their Skaven peers, and most are worked to death within a very short period of time.

Stealth

"Nothing was expected, and so the men were at ease. Sentries had been posted, but they, too, were weary from the road. We'd taken off our armour, set our weapons to the side. A pair of bruisers from Altdorf were throwing dice and telling bawdy jokes. Little did we realize that in mere moments, half of our number would be dead, and the other half would be running for their lives."

—Ulrich Krebs, Mercenary

Ambushing from the dark and using the shadows against their enemies is often one of the Skaven's best strategies. Like poison and disease, the element of surprise is a hallmark of the Skaven. The Ratmen will rarely accede to a fair fight, and any circumstance that gives them an advantage, no matter how underhanded, is readily exploited. Fighting during the daylight hours is not something that the Skaven do willingly, unless they are desperate or supremely confident in their ability to win.

Strength in Numbers

"... still, they kept coming. Wave after wave of rat-like demons, their lips pulled back to reveal yellowed fangs that sought our throats. We turned back their curved and jagged blades, and their lives were forfeited to our own weapons, yet they continued to advance. Over the corpses of their comrades they clambered, the dirt beneath their bodies turning to thick

mud as it mixed with the blood of the dead. Then a terrible bell tolled in the distance, and our line broke like a twig that has lain too long across a well-trodden trail . . ."

—Konrad Gregerson, Knight of Sigmar

Above all other tactics, the Skaven rely on their superior numbers to overwhelm their enemies. Skaven breed quickly, maturing in only a few short years, and their innate fecundity means their populations swell exponentially, even after they suffer massive casualties. Because life is cheap in the Under-Empire, the Skaven wholeheartedly waste the lives of their subordinates. Little distinction is made between the sacrifice of a single Clanrat slave and an entire regiment of Stormvermin. There are always others waiting in the shadows to take the places of the dead.

— Types of Skaven —

"Here, in my self-imposed Tilean exile, I put pen to parchment and record my knowledge. One day, perhaps, it may serve my brothers and sisters of the Empire, as undeserving as they may be. My name has been mocked and ridiculed in Wolfenburg, for I know a truth that my peers dare not accept. Perhaps I have been too harsh in my criticism of my countrymen; perhaps I have not been harsh enough. Until the day that Sigmar bids me return to my beloved homeland, I shall remain here, in a country where the Ratmen, otherwise known as the Skaven, are known, feared, and actively hunted."

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"The ever-wise Council of Thirteen wisely commanded me to record the deeds and nature of our mighty race. It is a great-great honour and I shall show my cunning in my words-words."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

The martial resources of the Skaven are vast and seemingly unconquerable. Their populations swell unchecked, and while most of the troops fielded by the rat kin may be repulsed in a fair fight by any mundane militia, there are others that are much more formidable and fearsome.

Assassins

"They doubtless sell their services to anyone willing to pay their horrible price. Their cursed skills were perfected in the Far East, which is why they seem alien to our own civilized sensibilities. Yet, these methods are quite effective. Even the bare hands of these bestial assassins are as effective as swords, and they strike like snakes from the darkness. To be marked by them is to be consigned to Morr's kingdom, for naught can save you once such a thing has come to pass."

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"All Clans fear the assassins. They envy-hate them for their power-strength. Assassins kill-kill Skaven and many Man-Things. To the Lords of Decay, the assassins are valuable tools that should not be squandered like hapless Clanrats."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

The Assassins of Clan Eshin represent the culmination of years of training and countless examples of murder most vile. Some of the most feared Skaven to creep through the Under-Empire belong to this elite group. Masters of poison, exceptionally skilled in the arts of hand-to-hand combat, and versed in the ways of stealth and conspiracy, these killers sell their services to any Skaven Warlord who can meet their exorbitant fees. They even offer their services to Humans who ask the right people and who offer the proper compensation.

The Council of Thirteen often employs Eshin's Assassins in their day to day affairs. Maintaining the status quo requires precision that only an Assassin can provide. In effect, the Assassins have been relegated to the status of a secret police force at the beck and call of the Lords of Decay. Clan Eshin is aware of this, and is perhaps a bit too smug within its position of power. So long as they remain useful to the Council, however, the assassins of Clan Eshin are beyond reproach.

Clanrats

"Typical Skaven, if there are such things, are much the same as typical men. They feed, they fight, they fear. Of course, the form of the creature offers an obvious difference between the two, as does the temperament of the beast itself, born in the darkness of the earth and fed to bursting upon paranoia and envy. They are the front line of the Under-Empire, the first wave of significant attack (or defence) to be fielded by their vile masters. Pity the general who underestimates them, but pity even more so the soldier who must face them."

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"The chittering hordes and strength of the Skaven are the Clanrats. They fill-fill our domain to bursting. It is their duty to die-die for us. Often is there need, and often do they give."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

Clanrats represent the rank and file troops of the Skaven. Compared to most other Skaven, they are unremarkable. Not surprisingly, they are the Ratmen who are most commonly encountered, either within the Under-Empire or in the world above. Senior Clanrats are known as Clawleaders, and each one is given dominion over his own Clanrat troops. Though they are more experienced and better able to wage war than their subordinates, most Clawleaders compare unfavourably to Stormvermin.

Clanrat Slaves

"The teeming multitudes of slaves, taken from their homes or wrested from the clutches of clans that no longer exist in the Skaven universe, are a pathetic lot. Many seek to prove themselves, hoping to rise above their station and gain an air of legitimacy in their new clans, while others consign themselves to lives of toil and pain in the mines or legions of their masters."

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"Man-things, stunty-things, and fat-things, slaves support our society. Some are Skaven taken from raids by strong-

powerful Clans. Their warlords are dead-dead now, their warrens under the rule of an enemy clan that rightly claims them, and their bodies-lives forfeit to the whims of leaders who were once their bitter hate-foes."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

The lowest of the Skaven are the Clanrat slaves. These unfortunates have been taken from their clans and forced into lives of servitude. They are expendable, and as such are often used in suicidal battlefield manoeuvres or sent first as shock troops to disrupt the enemy lines and cause messy diversions. Few Clanrat slaves survive for long, but those who do gain a small amount of legitimacy as Pawleaders.

Globadiers

"Clan Skryre fields troops that lob balls of poison into the ranks of their enemies. Those who succumb to these choking clouds die writhing upon the ground, drowning in their own bloody froth. Few who witness their assaults are unmoved by them, for their outlandish costumes and gas masks set the Globadiers apart from other Skaven. They are not merely enraged vermin who swing swords; instead, these faceless automatons are feared, merciless killers.

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"The delicate fingers of poison mist that drift across the battlefields of my brothers are birthed from the spheres that Skryre's Globadiers fling. The fumes float with deadly beauty, seeking the lungs of our foes. Taking root within the enemy, the poison turns their breath into blood-froth, and death-death soon follows."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

The weapons of Clan Skryre are as limitless in their scope as they are dreadful in their menace. Some of the most horrifying are those that kill many enemies with only a little effort. The poison wind globes are one such weapon, and they are dispensed by an elite corps called Globadiers. The Globadiers are trained in the uses of poisons, much like Assassins are. Unlike Eshin's killers, these Skaven instead focus their training upon toxins that can kill many enemies at once. The vapours that swim within poison wind globes are one such weapon, carried on the fickle winds of the battlefield and into the lungs of the enemy and, sometimes, into those of allies as well.

Globadiers wear unique protective gear which allows them to breathe these and other poisonous fumes without ill effect. Not only do the gas masks protect the Globadiers, but they lend each one a menacing appearance. They are used in battle to decimate large units. Once their poisonous cargo has been unleashed, they draw their blades and wade into the mass of their writhing victims to cut the throats of those who still claim some semblance of life.

Grey Seers

"The most fervent servants of the Horned Rat are known as Grey Seers. Raised from birth to serve their unholy master, the Grey Seers are the spiritual advisers of the Skaven legions. They commune with their horned god, offering advice and seemingly daring their leaders to discount it in favour of their own plots and plans. Who can

argue with the will of a god? Who would risk his wrath by ignoring his emissaries?"

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"Of my brothers, what need be said? We are the chosen of our Master, the true Lord of Decay, whose seat remains always-always filled upon the Council of Thirteen. Other seats may change hands, but His will always remain, and no-none other can lay claim to it. We speak His truths. We hear His thoughts. We know His purpose. We are the guides of our people, the spiritual compass that guides-leads them to their destinies as killer-masters of the world."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

The spiritual leaders of the Skaven are the Grey Seers. These grey or white rat kin are born with tiny horns that, along with the colour of their fur, mark them as the chosen of the Horned Rat. Cloistered away from the rest of the Under-Empire, they are tutored in the Lore of the Warp. Much of their time is spent in prayer to their horned god, seeking His favour and guidance.

Though it may seem a less hazardous course, the path of the Grey Seer is as treacherous as the road followed by any Skaven in the Under-Empire; perhaps more so. Initiates are commonly killed during their apprenticeship, both by the rigors of their training, as well as by the duplicity of their peers. If the competition between Skaven in the warrens is fierce, then it is doubly so in the cloisters of the Grey Seers. The Skaven that survive their apprenticeship are perhaps the most dangerous Ratmen of all. Apprentices are required to walk the Labyrinth of the Horned Rat to be fully initiated into the Grey Seers, and should they negotiate all of these successfully, they prove their fitness to guide (or some would say rule) Skaven society.

Gutter Runners

"Gutter runners are fast, even by the alacritous standards of the Skaven. They act as skirmishers in battle, harassing the enemy and disrupting the rear of his line. They are also grouped into teams that tunnel beneath enemy formations and fortifications, seeking to undermine their opponents' security. They are Clan Eshin's assassins-in-training, and while they are not as formidable as their murderous peers, they should never be underestimated."

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"Gutter Runners are strong-sneaky Night Runners. They slip behind enemy lines, and kill-kill."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

Gutter Runners are nimble and quick; they would have to be to have survived their apprenticeship in the ranks of Clan Eshin's Night Runners. They are elite skirmishers and scouts, second only to Eshin's Assassins in the art of stealth and speed. Their attacks are quick and effective, frustrating their enemies as the Gutter Runners appear, attack, and vanish just as quickly in a flash of smoke or a splash of shadow.

Night Runners

"Those Night Runners who somehow manage to survive the suicidal missions that they are sent upon eventually become Nightleaders, and those Nightleaders who show further initiative and fortitude are inducted into the ranks of the Gutter Runners. Thus do these vile creatures that excel at speed, stealth, and duplicity advance amongst their own kind, well on the road to one of the bloodiest and most feared of Skaven tiers."

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"Eshin Skaven, little better than Clanrats, they distract the man-things to reveal their weakness. Night Runners also creep-creep into man-thing places to spy-kill."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

Clan Eshin's rank and file troops are called Night Runners. Lightly armed and armoured so as to take advantage of their tremendous speed and agility, the Night Runners excel at flanking manoeuvres and lightning-fast attacks. They cannot stand long against heavily-armed or armoured opponents, and are best kept in a reserve role unless no other course is available. Despite their limitations, they are often thrown into the fray as necessary, their lives sacrificed en masse.

Night Runners who survive the rigors of their profession are well on their way to achieving Gutter Runner status, and each will gladly kill his brothers to advance his cause.

Packmasters

"The Giant Rats and Rat Ogres of Clan Moulder are driven and controlled by Skaven who show a talent for mastering beasts. They are called Packmasters, and the skill they display when controlling their foul pets is without compare. Wielding whips, the Packmasters steer their charges into the enemy formations in which they can cause the most damage."

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"Packmasters tend the beast-things of Clan Moulder. They control-lead Rat Ogres, Giant Rats and other kill-things."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

Skaven Packmasters drive packs of ravening beasts into battle, using whips and intimidation in order to spur their charges into a frenzy of teeth and claws. These beasts include swarms of rats, as well as mutated Giant Rats and horrific Rat Ogres of every description. The Packmasters display no fear of the creatures that they control, for to do so is to invite the beasts to turn on them. Even so, no beast is entirely predictable, and even a veteran Packmaster runs the constant risk of dying beneath his charges' teeth and claws.

Plague Censer Bearers

"Drawn from the ranks of the mad Plague Monks are the Censer Bearers, swinging their Warpstone-infused flails with unholy fury. A single grazing wound from one of these censers will kill a full-grown man, infecting him with a fast-acting plague that devours the body in mere moments. Covered from head to toe in a Plague Monk's pus-clotted robes, these Censer Bearers often lead charges into stronger enemy formations, followed by their frenzied the Plague Monk clanmates."

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"Fierce kill-soldiers, Censer Bearers kill-kill many man-things with their heavy smoking flails. Much-much die from their own poison."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

The bearers of Clan Pestilens' plague censers are taken from the ranks of Plague Monks. To be chosen for such duty is a grand honour, and one that is never refused, even though it will lead to the Monk's own death. To die in the service of the Horned Rat, swinging a smouldering plague censer with righteous zeal, is compensation enough for these maddened cultists.

Plague Monks

"Ah, yes. The Plague Monks. Where to begin? These wretched creatures have wholly embraced the diseased aspect of their horned god. They inflict themselves with sickness, drawing strength from it and gaining some measure of immunity to mundane diseases. So inured are they to pain and discomfort that they hardly feel it any longer. Driven by a fury and zeal that only the truly religious can comprehend, the Plague Monks are certainly one of the Skaven's most disturbing and terrible innovations."

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"Plague Monks do not know the true nature of the Horned Rat and kill themselves for it. They are useful, but deride-hate the Grey Seers. This impudence will be their done-death."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

The Plague Monks of Clan Pestilens are masters of contagion and disease. At the lowest levels are fervent and devoted worshippers of the Horned Rat, singing daily praises and liturgies to the Lord of Decay. Each is riddled with disease, covered with self-inflicted wounds and eruptions that ooze blood and pus. When unleashed against the enemies of the Skaven, Plague Monks are much more effective than one might expect. It is easy to discount their abilities, given their sicknesses, yet it seems that they find solace in their constant pain. Mundane discomforts like severed limbs and opened bellies cause them no more than passing discomfort.

The highest ranks of the Plague Monks are occupied by the Plague Priests, individuals who have proved themselves time and again and have survived countless plagues. These Priests are instrumental in the formulation of new diseases and poxes with which they seek to conquer the world. Even more powerful than Plague Priests are Plague Deacons, whose mastery over pestilence is second only to the Horned One himself.

Rat Ogres

"Not truly Skaven, the Rat Ogres, but they are aberrations nonetheless. I have seen but one in my travels and it is a memory that I hide even from myself. Bred in the pits of the Master Moulders, no two Rat Ogres are the same, yet they share enough similarities to be easily identified. When driven by Moulder's Packmasters, Rat Ogres are effective weapons of war. If left to their own devices, however, they are just as likely to feed on nearby offal as to kill the Skaven or their enemies."

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"Rat Ogres much-kill. Tough-strong, but hard to control, only the Packmasters can use them well-good."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

One of Clan Moulder's greatest accomplishments was the successful breeding of the so-called Rat Ogres. Certainly, there is a bit of Skaven blood flowing in the veins of these unwholesome creatures, but only Clan Moulder knows what other influences have lent their strength, ferocity, and voraciousness to the clan's Rat Ogres. Though they all share similarities, no two Rat Ogres are physically identical. Mutations bred into the creatures by the Master Moulders give them a variety of different shapes, sizes, and capabilities. Some are even surgically modified with implanted weapons, many of them experimental creations of Clan Skryre.

Each Rat Ogre receives training, of a sort, which involves constant deadly duels with Clan Moulder's other foul creations. Therein they learn to follow the guidance of their Packmasters and become used to the rigors of violent combat. They might also gain valuable insight into tactics and strategies, if they didn't forget anything too complex after a day or so in their pens. Despite their physical boons, Rat Ogres are barely sentient. Without the constant supervision of Moulder's Packmasters, a Rat Ogre would wander aimlessly about the battlefield, only stopping to grab a quick snack or to rip the throat from any living thing that was unlucky enough to attract its mercifully short attention.

Skaven Females

"Few have seen them and recognized them for what they are. Perhaps they are the key to the destruction of the Skaven, for without females, how would they propagate? Nevertheless, Skaven females do exist, cloistered away and used as necessary by those males who have earned the right to breed. Broods of ratlings are born within the Skaven nurseries, and their mothers are rarely without child for more than a month."

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"There are no Skaven females. Just Skaven broodmothers."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

It has been a common misconception that Skaven are all of the male gender. The specifics of where they come from are widely debated amongst those scholars who show an interest in the species, and include many ludicrous theories as to the origin of the Ratmen. One such postulation is that the Skaven are born directly from Chaos, while another claims they are merely ordinary rats that are mutated by constant exposure to Warpstone. The truth of the matter is that there are, indeed, female Skaven, locked away in the depths of the Under-Empire.

Female Skaven serve no other purpose than to propagate their vile species, and they are only slightly conscious of the events that transpire around them. Constant application of Warpstone-derived narcotics beginning at a young age keeps them blissfully ignorant of the events that transpire in the Under-Empire. So cloistered away from the rest of their race are they that they do not learn their race's chittering speech, nor are they proficient in even the simplest social skills…or so the Skaven believe.

Stormvermin

"Black of fur, the Skaven elite are reared from birth to be the ultimate warriors. Trained to fight and die if need be, Stormvermin are equipped with the best weapons and armour that the Lords of Decay have to offer. On the battlefield they have no equal, as they are rats bred for battle and weaned on the blood of their enemies."

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"Black Skaven are much-strong and loyal-loyal. Stormvermin guard Grey Seers and Warlords."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

Stormvermin are the pre-eminent troops of the Skaven legions. They are, to an individual, larger than the average Skaven, well-muscled, and proficient in the use of various weapons and armour. They are aggressive by nature and are given to overt displays of prowess in order to intimidate those around them. Like the Grey Seers, their future is determined at the time of their birth, for only Skaven with black fur are relegated to the ranks of the Stormvermin. As such, there is a certain esprit de corps shared by all Stormvermin that is lacking in other Skaven groups.

Of course, this camaraderie will only stretch so far. Stormvermin are constantly on the lookout for any weakness in their peers, and those who show such flaws will be mercilessly cut down by their brothers. Position in the ranks of the Stormvermin is achieved through a series of duels, though it occasionally falls on the last remaining survivor of a unit to take command. These Stormvermin officers, known as Fangleaders, are some of the deadliest Stormvermin of all.

Warlock Engineers

"Skryre's most powerful engineers meld sorcery and science until the two are indivisible. These individuals are called Warlock Engineers, and they are more akin to walking arsenals than to Skaven. Warp energy crackles from the blades that emerge from the flesh of their arms, and their rat-like bodies are covered in all manner of bizarre artifice. Tubes and wires pulse and buzz with unholy life as they connect the Engineer to his harness and its fantastic apparatus. Fearful and horrible, indeed, is Skryre's technology, if it allows such an unholy alliance of flesh and machine."

—Steffan Paulus Adelhof, Scholar of Wolfenburg

"Warlock Engineers have strong technology, better than stunt-things."

—Skreelin Thurntik, Grey Seer

With their goggles, harnesses that seemingly beep, whir, and click of their own accord, and the warp-blades that protrude from the flesh of their arms, Warlock Engineers are an intimidating sight. Individually, they are capable of decimating entire enemy columns with a few short bursts of highly-focused warp energy. So long as their technological components function normally, they bring terror and death to any battle or skirmish in which they participate.

Warlock Engineers are the pinnacle of Skaven technomancy. They combine well-known weapons, such as warp-blades, with heavy armour and experimental devices. Each Engineer equips his own harness with the devices that he prefers. These machinations do not always function flawlessly, however, and many Warlock Engineers have met their doom as the result of an exploding warp power accumulator.

— Tools of War —

The Skaven arsenal is immense, filled with many unique weapons and instruments of death. Not all of these are weapons that are forged of steel and iron. Some are magical powers and sorceries, mastered by the rat kin's warlocks and wizards. Others are items of magical origin, either created by Skaven smiths or stolen from enemies in times of battle or through covert intrigue.

Weapons of the Skaven

The craftsmanship of Skaven arms and armour is routinely shoddy and unsophisticated, especially given the massive demands placed on the Under-Empire's forges. The items produced in these smithies are manufactured quickly in order to meet the requirements of the teeming multitudes of Clanrat warriors infesting the Skaven warrens. Even though such items are of poor or, at best, common quality, they are nonetheless effective when wielded by their intended consumers.

The weapons found on **Table 6–1: Skaven Melee Weapons** and **Table 6–2: Skaven Missile Weapons** are described here, along with any special rules that arise as a result of wielding them in combat. Note that all prices are listed in Warp Tokens. These items are never available for sale on the surface.

Blowgun

Clan Eshin Assassins use these simple lacquered tubes to fire poisoned darts. Usually about a foot to three feet in length, one end is fitted with a flexible cup crafted from leather that fits over the mouth of the firer. While the damage inflicted by blowgun darts is negligible, the tips are often coated with virulent poisons. Any hit by a poisoned dart that inflicts Wound damage upon a target results in the delivery of the poison.

When not using them as weapons, Clan Eshin's Assassins have been known to use their blowguns as snorkels as they hide beneath the placid surface of a pond, lake, or stream.

Plague Censer

One of the greatest honours bestowed on members of Clan Pestilens is the bestowal of the plague censer. This large, incense-filled flail disperses Warpstone incense smoke such that those struck by the weapon contract a supernaturally-enhanced

Table 6–1: Skaven Melee Weapons

Name	Cost	Enc	Group	Damage	Qualities	Availability
Plague Censer	10	85	Flail	SB+1	Impact, Special, Tiring	Rare
Punch Dagger	1	15	Ordinary	SB–1	Balanced, Defensive	Average
Rat Claws	2	10	Ordinary	SB–3	Special	Scarce
Tail Blade	2	5	Ordinary	SB–2	Fast, Special	Common
Things-Catcher	13	170	Two-handed	SB+1	Snare	Scarce

Table 6–2: Skaven Missile Weapons

Name	Cost	Enc	Group	Damage	Range	Reload	Qualities	Availability
Blowgun	2	10	Blowgun	0	8/16	Half	None	Very Rare
Poisoned-Wind Globe	6	5	Throwing	Special	4/20	Full	Special	Scarce
Ratling Gun	8	10	Engineer	3	10/30	10 Full	Experimental, Shrapnel	Very Rare
Smoke Bomb	3	5	Throwing	—	4/20	Full	Special	Scarce
WarpfireThrower	10	—	Engineer	4	Special	10 Full	Experiment, Special	Very Rare
Warplock Jezzail	12	60	Gunpowder	5	48/96	2 Full	Armour Piercing, Unreliable	Rare
Warplock Pistol	10	25	Gunpowder	5	10/20	2 Full	Armour Piercing, Unreliable	Rare

disease. Though not contagious by normal means, the disease ravages the lungs and flesh of those it affects, leaving them choking upon their own clotting gore as they die.

When used in combat, any living creature struck by this weapon must succeed on a Hard (–20%) Toughness Test or lose 1d10/2 Wounds regardless of Toughness Bonus or armour. Furthermore, those who fail the initial test must pass Challenging –10%) Toughness Test on the following round or lose an additional 1d10/2 Wounds regardless of Toughness Bonus or armour. Finally, living creatures struck by plague censers and who survive face a special horror. After 24-hours, they must make a Routine (+10%) Toughness Test. If they fail, their race changes to Mutant and they gain 1 mutation. For more information on playing Mutants, be sure to check out *Tome of Corruption.*

For as long as the Warpstone incense burns, everyone around the Plague Censer (including its bearer) is at risk of its horrid effects. All living creatures within 2 yards (1 square) of a burning plague censer must succeed on a Toughness Test each round or lose 2 Wounds regardless of armour or Toughness Bonus due to the toxic fumes.

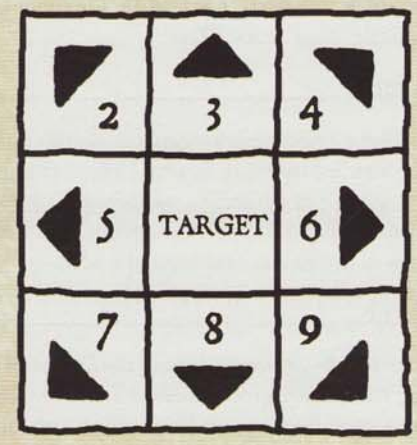
Poisoned Wind Globe

A Clan Skryre innovation, these small hollow glass spheres contain a noxious gas. When thrown, the sphere shatters, dispersing the poison. Used extensively by Clan Skryre Clan Rats, these weapons are devastating to both Skaven and their enemies.

To use a poisoned wind globe, select a square within range. Make a Ballistic Skill Test as normal. If you fail the test, roll 1d10 and consult the following chart to see where it shatters.

Roll 1: You drop the poisoned wind globe at your feet, but somehow it doesn't break.

Roll 2–9: The poisoned wind globe falls 1d10 yards short of the target. See diagram as to where.



Roll 10: You drop the poisoned wind globe at your feet and it shatters.

When the globe shatters, it releases a cloud of poisonous gas. Use the small template. The gas remains for 1d10/2 rounds after which time it loses potency. Any creature caught in the cloud must succeed on a Challenging (–10%) Toughness Test or take a Damage 4 hit that ignores armour and Toughness Bonus.

Pain-Pain Snail

While not a weapon per se, the Pain-Pain Snail is a useful creature that the Skaven have cultivated for centuries. Taken from the jungles of Lustria, these inoffensive-looking creatures seem innocuous enough at first glance. But when placed on flesh, they exude a horrible acid that eats through flesh quickly. Skaven Interrogators use these creatures to coax information from their captives. It's said that no one has held out past three of these things placed in the soft tissues and cavities of the body.

When placed on the flesh, the Pain-Pain Snail deals 1 point of Damage that ignores armour and Toughness Bonus each round until removed.

Each round the poison gas remains potent, the cloud drifts 1d10/5 squares. Roll 1d10 and consult the diagram to see which direction it moves (though the GM may override the result if there is a specific wind direction and strength). On a roll of a 1, the cloud stays where it is. On a roll of a 10, it suddenly loses potency and disperses.

Punch Dagger

Skaven of Clan Eshin use punch daggers, a type of weapon that features one or two piercing or slashing blades that jut between the fingers and are attached perpendicularly to a handle. Some variations require the wielder to strap the weapon to the wrist. To use, the wielder makes quick stabbing motions or fast slashes. These weapons, which are often used in pairs, are not common outside of Clan Eshin.

Rat Claws

Another Clan Eshin device, a rat claw is a metal plate threaded with a leather strap to tie to the paw, and three to five steel claws extending out from the plate. While the claws are not overlarge, they are used to enhance unarmed attacks. In addition, rat claws are useful climbing tools, providing a +10% bonus to all Scale Sheer Surface Tests.

Ratling Gun

One of Clan Skryre's newer innovations, the ratling gun consists of a large, multi-barrelled repeating firearm. Unlike other gunpowder weapons, the ratling gun can spray a number of Warpstone bullets at once, decimating entire formations of troops. This weapon requires a crew of two to use: a gunner and loader.

Smoke Bomb

Skaven smoke bombs are found among the Skaven of Clan Eshin. Using craftsmanship techniques learned in Cathay and Nippon, these small fragile grenades are filled with an explosive powder that detonates with a flash on impact.

To use a smoke bomb, select a square within range. Make a Ballistic Skill Test as normal. If you fail the test, roll 1d10 and consult the poisoned wind globe chart (page 73) to see where it shatters. When the bomb shatters, it releases a cloud of oily smoke. Use the small template. The cloud remains for 1d10/2 rounds, after which time it loses potency. All creatures within the cloud have their vision reduced to 2 yards (1 square).

Each round, the cloud drifts 1d10/5 squares. Roll 1d10 and consult the poisoned wind globe diagram to see which direction it moves (though the GM may override the result if there is a specific wind direction and strength). On a roll of a 1, the cloud stays where it is. On a roll of a 10, it suddenly loses potency and disperses.

Tail Blade

Tail blades are small bladed, barbed, or spiked weapons designed to be worn or strapped to a Skaven's tail. Tail blades that are used by more affluent Skaven are often ornamental as well as deadly, etched with glyphs and studded with small crystal shards and bits of Warpstone. In comparison, those used by Clanrats are almost always homemade. To effectively use this weapon, you must have the Tail Fighting Talent.

Things-Catcher

This two-handed pole arm has a large, tong-like head lined on the inside with spikes. Designed to be thrust around the torsos and extremities of foes, these weapons can immobilize creatures of nearly any size. Clan Moulder is the only Skaven clan to use things-catchers on a regular basis, though they are also employed by warbands that are sent to fetch slaves or prisoners.

Warpfire Thrower

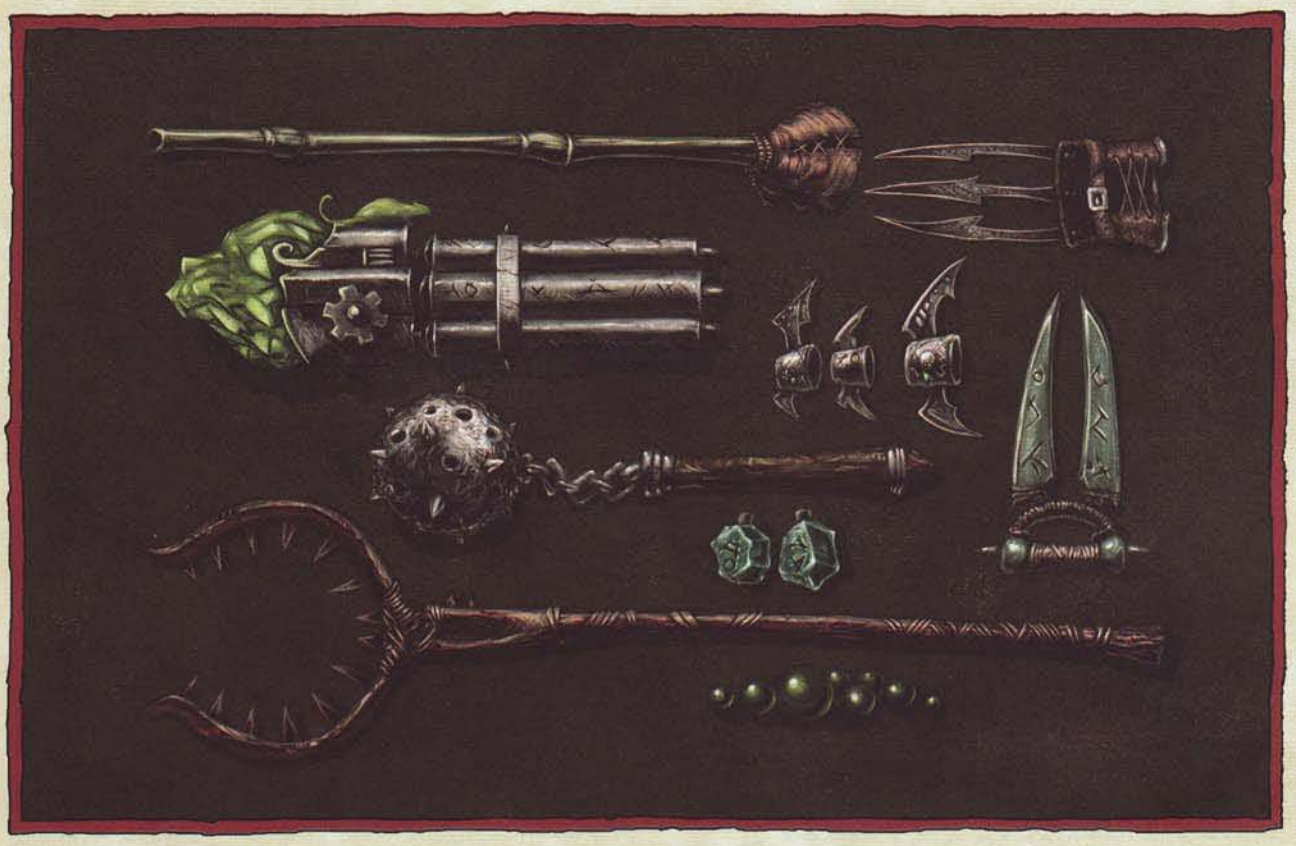
One of the most feared weapons employed by the Skaven is the warpfire thrower. Another mad innovation by the Warlock Engineers of Clan Skryre, these "cannons" release a stream of sticky burning gel made from Warpstone that incinerates nearly anything with which it comes into contact. Too large to be used by just one Skaven, these weapons have crews of three or four.

Use the cone template. All creatures caught in the cone take the indicated damage regardless of armour. In addition, they must succeed on an Agility Test or catch fire (see *WFRP*, page 136). However, the fire can only be extinguished by smothering it completely, such as with total immersion in water, sand, dirt, and so on. Alternatively, the victim can put himself out by scraping the stuff off and succeeding on a Challenging (–10%) Agility Test.

Those living creatures who survive the flames of a warpfire thrower face a special horror. After 24-hours, they must make a Routine (+10%) Toughness Test. If they fail, their race changes to Mutant and they gain 1 mutation. For more information on playing Mutants, be sure to check out *Tome of Corruption*.

Warplock Jezzail

Similar in some respects to the jezzails of Araby (see *Old World Armoury* page 46), the jezzails employed by the Skaven use



a distinct "warplock" technology perfected by the Warlock Engineers. The warplock jezzail operates on a principle similar to that of a wheel-lock musket, but small amounts of Warpstone have been worked into both the weapon's metal components and its ammunition. This provides for added barrel strength, allowing a larger measure of Warpstone-fortified powder to be loaded into the weapon.

Warplock jezzails can utilize mundane gunpowder and bullets, but this reduces their Range to 24/72, and reduces the Damage to 3.

Warplock Pistol

Warplock pistols are commonly used by higher-ranking Skaven, especially the fangleaders of Clan Skryre. Similar in design to warplock jezzails, yet smaller in scale, warplock pistols are devastating at close range.

Warplock pistols can utilize mundane gunpowder, but this reduces their Range to 8/16, and their Damage to 4.

Clan Skryre's Tools of War

Any discussion of the Skaven's arsenals would be incomplete without mentioning the less vile but still effective support equipment design by Clan Skryre. In fact, the Skaven have grown to expect disastrous malfunctions from their weapons, and many of the items below were designed to protect the Skaven from their own weapons moreso than from those of their enemies.

Clan Skryre Gas Mask

Clan Skryre's poison Globadiers wear complicated contraptions upon their backs that consist of metal tubes and bellows, all of which connect to their gas masks. These masks, designed solely for the use of Skaven, grant the Globadiers some protection from the gasses that often escape from stray or malfunctioning wind globes.

Any Skaven that wears a Clan Skryre gas mask gains a +20% bonus to any Toughness Tests he makes to resist the effects of inhaled poisons or gasses.

Supercharged Warp-Power Accumulator

A Warlock Engineer equipped with a supercharged warp-power accumulator increases the amount of warp energy channelled into any Warp Lightning spells that he casts. When rolling Damage for the Warp Lightning spell, the Warlock may roll two dice and choose the one with the higher result.

If both dice have the same result, no matter how high or low, the warp-power accumulator begins to overload. Unless the Warlock Engineer can shut the accumulator down, which requires a Hard (–20%) Intelligence Test, it explodes. Use the large template to represent the explosion. Any creature caught in the blast takes a hit that deals Damage 5.

Upgraded Warp Energy Condenser

Warlock Engineers that use warp-blades in order to cast the Warp Lightning spell can benefit from the addition of an upgraded warp energy condenser. The condenser focuses warp

energy, further powering the Warlock's weapons. When using warp-blades in combat, a Warlock Engineer with an upgraded warp energy condenser inflicts an additional +1 Damage. When casting the Warp Lightning spell through a warp-blade, the Warlock can add one die to his Casting Roll.

Warp-Blades

Warp-blades are unique to Clan Skryre. They are commonly attached to poles, creating halberd-like weapons, or they are directly implanted into the arms of Warlock Engineers. A multitude of wires feed the blades, which hum with barely-contained warp energy. When used in hand-to-hand combat, warp-blades are treated as either halberds (in the case of those mounted on poles), or hand weapons (when they are implanted into a Warlock's arms), both with a +1 bonus to Damage.

Warp-blades can also be used by Warlock Engineers to cast the Warp Lightning spell. The spell is cast as normal, but the warp-blades act as a magical ingredient that grants a +2 bonus to the Casting Roll.

— Skaven Magic —

When one thinks of Skaven Magic, the first thing most think of is that used by the Grey Seers. A perverse blend of arcane sorcery with divine inspiration, Grey Seers are powerful and unpredictable in their black arts. But magic is deeply invested in Skaven society, and the Grey Seers are not the only ones who have some degree of mastery of sorcery. The Plague Priests and Deacons have developed their own breed of horrid spells, while the Warlock Engineers learned to draw the Warp energy contained within Warpstone and channel it into their perverse arcane devices. What follows is a survey of the types of magic employed by the Skaven.

Petty Magic (Warp)

Regardless of the type of spellcaster, Skaven who dabble in magic must learn to master these spells first. Anyone with Petty Magic (Warp) can attempt to cast the following spells.

Favour

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A bit of Human flesh (+1)
Description: You gain a +5% bonus to your next test. Alternatively, if you are using the Favour of the Horned Rat rules, described in **Chapter VI: Skaven Characters**, this petty spell steals the Favour of the Horned Rat from another Ratman within 16 yards (8 squares). You need not know which Skaven had the Favour. If there are no Skaven in range with the Favour, then this spell automatically fails.

Ghostly Flame

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A pinch of Warpstone powder (+1)
Description: You conjure a small blob of glowing green fire out of thin air. It drips viscous fluid as it burns. You may hurl this fiery mess at a target within 8 yards (4 squares) in which case *ghostly flame* functions as a *magic missile* with Damage 1. Otherwise, this petty spell generates light equivalent to a torch and remains for one hour before sputtering out.

Mark of the Horned Rat

Casting Number: 3
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A rotten tooth (+1)
Description: A target creature of your choosing within 16 yards (8 squares) must succeed on a Will Power Test or gain an unsightly blemish, taking the form of an open weeping sore on his forehead or the back of his hand. The blemish remains for 1d10 hours and imposes a –5% penalty to all Fellowship Tests for as long as it remains. Grey Seers use this spell to mark their messengers.

Rat Thrall

Casting Number: 3
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A bit of mouldy cheese (+1)
Description: You summon an ordinary brown rat. For the next 1d10 hours, you may communicate with the rat as if you shared a common language, and it must obey all of your commands even if it would cause its own death to do so. Rat thralls can fetch small objects, gnaw through ropes, and other general tasks that an ordinary rat should be able to do, but such missions are limited by the rat's animal intelligence.

Warpstone Tokens

Though used as currency in the Under-Empire, Warpstone Tokens can also be used to empower a spellcaster's ability to work magic. Grey Seers and other Skaven spellcasters can augment their Casting Rolls by consuming one or more tokens. Each token devoured grants a +3 bonus to the spellcaster's next Casting Roll. However, each use also increases the danger of Tzeentch's Curse: Treat doubles on Casting Rolls as triples and triples as quadruples.

Warpstone Addiction

Though Warpstone pervades the lives of the Skaven, some can become overly accustomed to ingesting it, becoming addicted to the substance. Each time a Skaven devours a Warpstone token, he must make a Challenging (–10%) Will Power Test or become addicted to Warpstone. He must consume 1 Warpstone Token each day or take a cumulative –10% penalty to all Tests for each day he has gone without Warpstone. If the penalties reduce his Toughness to 0, he dies. Unlike other drugs, the addiction to which can be escaped after extreme suffering, Warpstone addiction is life long.

Though there is great risk with Warpstone addiction, there is also great reward. Skaven characters afflicted with this disorder have no penalty when using Warpstone Tokens as part of Skaven magic, meaning that they do not treat doubles as triples, nor do they treat triples as quadruples.

Vector

Casting Number: 4
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A wad of dung (+1)
Description: One target within 16 yards (8 squares) must succeed on a Toughness Test or take a –20% penalty to all tests made to resist disease for 24 hours. Targets with Resistance to Disease may apply that talent's bonus to Tests made to resist this spell.

Wrack

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A tear from a Human child (+1)
Description: You cause a single target within 12 yards (6 squares) to experience a jolt of searing pain. The target must succeed on a Toughness Test or take a –5% penalty to Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, and Agility Tests for 1d10 rounds.

Dark Lores

To the Skaven, all magic originates from the Horned Rat. From the terrible sorcery of the Grey Seers to the pestilential machinations of the Plague Priests, it all comes from the same source: their powerful and fickle god. Dogma aside, the truth is that Skaven magic still involves the manipulation of the arcane energies blowing south from the turbulent polar region beyond the Chaos Wastes, and without this energy not even the most devout and cunning Skaven could weave the simplest spell. Skaven use *Dhar*, or Dark Magic, much like the Thrall Wizards of Tzeentch, Necromancers, Black Magisters, and Witches. Skaven differ from these casters, however, in the product and focus of their black arts.

Though other variations may exist, there are three fundamental types of Skaven magic, each organized into a separate lore—Plague, Stealth, and Warp. A rare few Skaven dabble in Necromancy and fewer still abandon the ways of their people to embrace another Chaos God. Such instances almost always result with the disintegration of the offending Skaven.

As with all Dark Lores, casting spells using *Dhar* carries great risk of developing unwanted or unexpected side-effects (see *WFRP*, page 159). As well, Skaven spellcasters use Warpstone heavily in their spells, which not only creates greater risk of mishaps, but also takes its toll on their bodies.

Knowledge of these spells is taught from master to apprentice, and is carefully protected amidst the ambition and treachery prevalent among all Skaven. Though a master might teach the rudiments of Warp Magic, he does so grudgingly, as his student must eventually contest his power and perhaps even try to overthrow him. Thus, Skaven mentors are careful to instil fear and respect in their apprentices and to play favourites, always working to pit one student against another to distract these treacherous pupils from betraying their master.

The Lore of Plague

The Lore of Plague is a foul magical technique. The Plague Priests of Clan Pestilens use this magic, which is the product of generations of isolation in Lustria, to cow the Clanrats and other Skaven who swear allegiance to their Warlord. Specializing in matters of disease and decay, this lore is repellent and thoroughly evil, designed to spread sorrow and death in enemies. Each mortal who succumbs to the ravages of these spells exalts the power and majesty of the Horned Rat in his plague-bringer aspect. As the Plague Priest grows more powerful, he finds his body ravaged by the magic he employs. Commonly, this results in rotting extremities akin to those suffered by lepers, infestations of maggots and mites, and a general collapse of the spellcaster's body. While powerful, the Lore of Plague brings its practitioners' deaths with it.

Lore Skill: Intimidate

Table 6–3: Lore of Plague

Mantle of Contagion
Musk of Terror
Pestilent Breath
Plague
Poisonous Pustule
Putrefy
Toxic Rain
Veil of Flies
Vermintide
Weeping Wound

The Lore of Stealth

Learned from the Cathay sorcerers of the distant east, the Lore of Stealth is used by the ever rare Eshin Sorcerer. These spells are designed to augment the stealth, speed, and strength of the Clan's attack forces, and none are quite sure whether Clan Eshin Skaven's legendary skills have ever been completely mundane. Clan Eshin guards the secrets of this art to ensure that none of the rival Clans learn the answer.

Lore Skill: Prepare Poison

Table 6–4: Lore of Stealth

Black Whirlwind
Buoyant Passage
Death Frenzy
Pelt of the Assassin
Poisonous Pustule
Skitterleap
Stickypaws
Swiftscamper
Traceless Demise
Warp Stars

The Lore of Warp

The province of the terrible Grey Seers, the Lore of Warp allows Skaven to dabble in the domains of Plague and Stealth as well as to harness the power of Warp energy itself. The older and more practised the practitioners of Warp Lore become, the longer their horns grow, and often the greater their dependence on Warpstone.

Lore Skill: Academic Knowledge (Theology)

Table 6–5: Lore of Warp

Armour of Darkness
Crackling Doom
Death Frenzy
Flensing Ruin
Pestilent Breath
Plague
Skitterleap
Vermintide
Warp Lightning
Warp Storm

New Spells

The following new spells come from the three new Dark Lores (Plague, Stealth, and Warp).

Armour of Darkness

Casting Number: 10
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A piece of blackened leather (+2)
Description: You solidify the shadows around your body. In addition to making you harder to see in low light conditions, this shadow armour also protects you from harm. You gain 1 armour point to each location, and you gain a +20% bonus to any Concealment Skill Tests you make in dim conditions. The effects of this spell last a number of minutes equal to your Magic Characteristic. You cannot cast this spell if you are wearing any normal armour. Should you don armour while the spell is in effect, the spell ends.

Black Whirlwind

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: Full action
Ingredient: A glass vial filled with ash (+3)
Description: You summon a putrid whirlwind of vile smoke and stinging ashes anywhere within 48 yards (24 squares). Use the small template. The whirlwind moves up to 10 yards (5 squares) per round, in any direction you wish. Those affected by the whirlwind take a Damage 2 hit, and must succeed on a Toughness Test or take a –20% penalty to their Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Agility Tests, and Perception Tests involving sight for 1d10 minutes. This swirling cloud lasts a number of rounds equal to your Magic Characteristic.

Buoyant Passage

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A piece of cork (+1)
Description: You become as buoyant as a piece of balsa wood, allowing you to tread over liquid surfaces like water, sewage, or oil as if they were solid. The effects of this spell last a number of minutes equal to your Magic Characteristic.

Crackling Doom

Casting Number: 7
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A coil of copper wire (+1)
Description: You send a single crackling arc of green energy at any opponent within 12 yards (6 squares. *Crackling doom* is a *magic missile* with Damage 2. In addition, anyone damaged by this spell must succeed on a Routine (+10%) Toughness Test or become stunned for 1 round.

Death Frenzy

Casting Number: 18
Casting Time: Full action
Ingredient: Two drops of blood from a rabid animal (+2)
Description: You fill an ally with a horrible ravenous hunger, causing foam to fleck his mouth and his eyes to roll madly in his head. Select one allied character within 18 yards (9 squares). That creature gains the Black Hunger Talent (see **Chapter VI: Skaven Characters**) for 1d10 rounds plus a number of rounds equal to your Magic Characteristic. The subject of this spell must enter Black Hunger as soon as the spell is cast, or loses the benefits of the spell.

Flensing Ruin

Casting Number: 25
Casting Time: Full action
Ingredient: A piece of tanned skin from a Human, Elf, or Dwarf (+3)
Description: Green ribbons of Warp energy tear the flesh from the target's bones. Select a single target within 10 yards (5 squares). That target takes a Damage 5 hit each round, regardless of armour or Toughness Bonus, for a number of rounds equal to your Magic Characteristic.

Mantle of Contagion

Casting Number: 6
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A swatch of flesh cut from the back of a plague victim (+1)
Description: You taint a blanket, cloak, or piece of clothing with a virulent strain of Kruts. Anyone that touches or wears the item for a minute or more must succeed at a Challenging (–10%) Toughness Test or contract the disease.

Musk of Terror

Casting Number: 20
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: An iron token carved with the Horned Rat's symbol (+3)
Description: You summon a large cloud of demonic musk, forcing all creatures within to cower with terror. The cloud appears anywhere within 36 yards (18 squares) of you, and lasts for a number of rounds equal to your Magic Characteristic. Use the large template. Anyone within the cloud must succeed at a Terror Test (see *WFRP*, page 198). Skaven suffer a –10% penalty to this test. An affected character that has been removed from the cloud continues to suffer from the effects of Terror for 1 additional minute (6 rounds).

Pelt of the Assassin

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A chameleon scale (+2)
Description: By calling upon the ever-changing chaos of the Warp, you alter the structure of your fur so that it changes colour to match your surroundings. When perfectly still, you gain a +30% bonus to any Concealment Skill Tests you make. *Pelt of the assassin* lasts a number of minutes equal to your Magic Characteristic.

Pestilent Breath

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: Full action
Ingredient: A stick of Warpstone incense lit at both ends (+2)
Description: You exhale a pestilent, poisonous cloud at your enemies. Use the cone template. Anyone within the cone must succeed at a Challenging (–10%) Toughness Test or take a Damage 4 hit regardless of armour or Toughness Bonus. You are immune to your own *pestilent breath*.

Plague

Casting Number: 26
Casting Time: Full action
Ingredient: A sprinkling of several dead fleas (+3)
Description: You infect one or more characters within 18 yards (9 squares) with the Green Pox. Use the small template. All affected characters must succeed at a Toughness Test or suffer the immediate effects of the disease, losing 5% from every characteristic on their main profile. The first time other characters come into close contact (melee range) with anyone affected by the plague, they must also succeed at Toughness Tests or they will also become infected with Green Pox. These secondary targets suffer the normal effects of the disease, rather than the rapid-onset version suffered by the original targets. Likewise, these secondary targets can only pass on the disease by normal means rather than to anyone who comes near them. Anyone who succeeds on either Toughness Test cannot be affected by other castings of the *plague* spell, even if cast by other wizards, for 24 hours.

Poisonous Pustule

Casting Number: 10
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A rusting healer's lance (+2)
Description: You create a pulsing, seeping pustule on one of your extremities. When lanced and drained (which

inflicts 1 Wound upon you, regardless of your Toughness Bonus or armour), the pus from this weeping sore can be spread onto a hand weapon. If a weapon coated with this toxic secretion inflicts at least 1 Wound, it deals an additional number of Wounds equal to your Magic Characteristic unless the target succeeds at a Hard (–20%) Toughness Test.

Putrefy

Casting Number: 8
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A handful of rotten grain (+1)
Description: With a flourish and a curse, you cause an amount of food to rot and decay, rendering it totally inedible. Use the large template. You can *putrefy* any amount of food within this radius. This spell is used with great effect to induce famine in surface populations. Any creature that eats the infected food is automatically infected with the Galloping Trots.

Skitterleap

Casting Number: 8
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: The hind leg of a rat (+1)
Description: With a sound of inrushing air and a puff of brimstone-scented smoke, you teleport yourself or one ally within 12 yards (6 squares) to any location that you have line of sight to. If teleporting an ally, he must be of Human-size or smaller. You must be able to physically see the location that you are teleporting yourself or your ally to, and this location must be free of obstructions and at least 2 yards (1 square) removed from any objects (other than the surface you will end up standing on) or creatures.

Stickypaws

Casting Number: 12
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A drop of glue or honey (+2)
Description: You grant yourself the ability to walk or crawl upon walls and ceilings at a speed equal to your normal Movement Characteristic. This spell lasts a number of minutes equal to your Magic Characteristic. Objects you carry or wear are still affected by gravity in a normal fashion, and fall to the ground if dropped.

Swiftscamper

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: An Elf's scalp (+2)
Description: You grant yourself the ability move at an increased rate. Your Movement Characteristic increases by an amount equal to your Magic Characteristic. This additional speed lasts for one minute (6 rounds), plus one additional round per point that your Casting Roll exceeds the spell's Casting Number.

Toxic Rain

Casting Number: 24
Casting Time: Full action
Ingredient: A baby cave viper (+3)
Description: Calling upon the power of the Horned Rat, you conjure a poisonous cloud that drifts above a dozen feet above the ground up to 36 yards (18 squares) away. Use the large template. On the round following the casting of this spell, the cloud rains a lethal poison upon all characters within the affected area. All creatures in the affected area must succeed at a Toughness Test or slip into a nightmare-filled slumber. Additionally, all characters in the affected area must succeed on a Challenging (–10%) Toughness Test each round or take a Damage 2 hit, regardless of armour or Toughness Bonus. Slumbering characters who succeed on three Toughness Tests in a row throw off the effects of this spell. Otherwise, they can be awakened normally. The poisonous cloud lasts for one minute (6 rounds), plus one additional round per point of your Magic Characteristic.

Traceless Demise

Casting Number: 22
Casting Time: One hour
Ingredient: An ounce of Warpstone, consumed by the target(s) (+3)
Description: The body of any creature that dies while under the effects of this spell melts away into a foul-smelling black slime. *Traceless demise* is commonly cast upon the assassins of Clan Eshin before they embark on a hunt,

ensuring that no Skaven corpses are left behind. This spell affects a number of allies equal to four times your Magic Characteristic, and lasts for a number of hours equal to your Magic Characteristic.

Veil of Flies

Casting Number: 18
Casting Time: Full action
Ingredient: A piece of Nurgling dung (+2)
Description: With a curse and a flailing of your arms, you summon a cloud of gnats and biting flies. They swarm about you, biting and stinging your enemies. Centre the small template on you. The swarm moves with you and lasts for a number of rounds equal to twice your Magic Characteristic. Opponents within the swarm suffer a –20% penalty to all tests. *Veil of flies* also makes it hard for your enemies to see you, imposing a –20% penalty to all Ballistic Skill Tests made against you.

Vermintide

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Full action
Ingredient: A wheel of Good cheese (+2)
Description: You summon a mass of voracious rats to swarm over and attack your foes. Centre the large template on you to represent the rats. All creatures (except you) within the area of this spell take a Damage 1 hit each round they remain in the swarm. On the following round, the swarm of rats moves 12 yards (6 squares) in a direction you specify. Once they move you lose control over the swarm, and each round the swarm moves in a random direction. The swarm retains its cohesion for a number of rounds equal to your Magic Characteristic.

Warp Lightning

Casting Number: 11
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A slender copper rod (+2)
Description: You send a powerful, sizzling bolt of warp lightning at a single foe within 48 yards (24 squares). This is a *magic missile* with Damage 5. For every 1 that comes up on your Casting Roll, you take a Damage 1 hit as you lose control of the warp energy you try to harness.

Warp Stars

Casting Number: 26
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A silver shuriken carved with runes of chaos (+3)
Description: You conjure up a number of poisoned *warp stars* equal to your Magic Characteristic and fling them at one or more opponents within 36 yards (18 squares). *Warp stars* are *magic missiles* with Damage 2. A *warp star* that deals at least 1 Wound deals 5 additional Wounds unless the target succeeds at a Hard (–20%) Toughness Test.

Warp Storm

Casting Number: 18
Casting Time: Full action
Ingredient: The likeness of the Horned Rat carved from copper (+2)
Description: You summon a storm of warp lightning anywhere within 48 yards (24 squares). This storm is formed of pure warp energy, fuelled by the malignant power of the Horned Rat, and may appear in any locale, even underground. Use the large template to represent the *warp storm*. All those affected take a Damage 5 hit. For every 1 that comes up on your Casting Roll, you take a Damage 3 hit as the power of the warp careens out of your control.

Weeping Wounds

Casting Number: 12
Casting Time: Half action
Ingredient: A goblin claw covered in filth (+2)
Description: You cause an enemy's wounds to become horribly infected. *Weeping wounds* is a *magic missile* with a range of 24 yards (12 squares). If it impacts a target who has suffered one or more Critical Hits, the target's wounds become infected. Infection is a disease that lasts 7 days. The victim of an infected injury does not recover Wounds normally, and suffers a –10% penalty to all the Characteristics on his Main Profile. Characters with the Heal Skill can shorten the duration of this disease as normal, but the difficulty of the Heal Test to do so is increased to Challenging (–10%).

— Warpstone —

The biggest users of Warpstone in the Old World are undoubtedly the Skaven. They have devised all manner of uses for the substance, from augmenting their spells to powering strange automatons. If a character is lucky (or unlucky) enough to uncover a piece of Warpstone, he may use it. Warpstone is quite potent, but it is also dangerous, even more so to those who don't respect or understand its power. Warpstone's effects depend on the form in which it is found as well as its quantity and the degree of exposure.

Any character who fails his Toughness Test when exposed to Warpstone gains a mutation. Roll on **Table 2–1: Expanded Chaos Mutations** in the *Old World Bestiary* or **Table 11–1: Chaos Mutations** in *WFRP*.

Warpstone Dust

Achieved by grinding Warpstone into a fine white powder, this dust has its greatest effect when ingested. Warpstone Dust is commonly used by Grey Seers to enhance their ability to manipulate sorcerous energies. For those not accustomed to eating Warpstone, the effects are quite dangerous, causing all sorts of negative mutations.

Skaven treat Warpstone Dust as if they had consumed a Warpstone Token. For all others, subjects must succeed on a Toughness Test with a difficulty dependant on the extent of contact or gain a mutation. A single dose of Warpstone Dust is one ounce.

- **Very Easy (+30%):** Spilling a small amount on clothing.
- **Easy (+20%)**: Skin contact with a small amount.
- **Routine (+10%):** Skin contact with a moderate amount.
- **Average (+0%):** Swallowing or breathing in a small amount or skin contact with a large amount.
- **Challenging (–10%):** Swallowing or breathing in a moderate amount or skin contact with one dose.
- **Hard (–20%):** Swallowing or breathing in a two doses or more.
- **Very Hard (–30%):** Swallowing or breathing in the five doses or more.

Warpstone Tokens

Warpstone Tokens are small pieces of Warpstone, occasionally shaped in disks, but also in rings, wedges, or small blocks. Skaven eat them to aid in spellcasting. Other characters that come into contact with a Warpstone Token must succeed on a Toughness Test or gain a mutation. It is generally impossible for non-Skaven to successfully consume one of these Tokens, but if attempted, the individual must succeed on a Hard (–20%) Toughness Test to avoid gaining a mutation.

Assuming a character survives contact with a Warpstone Token intact, he can use the substance as an additional ingredient. Each Token used adds +3 to the next Casting Roll, but it also increases the risk of Tzeetch's Curse. Treat all doubles on Casting Rolls as triples, and all triples as quadruples.

Unrefined Warpstone

Raw Warpstone is dangerous even to Skaven. Touching this substance with unprotected hands deals a Damage 3 hit (regardless of armour or Toughness Bonus). In addition, the subject permanently loses 1 Wound as the burn from touching the rock never heals. Finally, subjects automatically gain a mutation.

Warlock Engineers, Master Moulders and other villains in Skaven society treasure such lodes since it allows them to create the most abominable creations, ranging from Warpfire Cannons to Rat Ogres. Spellcasters who casting spells within 6 yards (3 squares) or less of unrefined Warpstone gain a +6 bonus to Casting Rolls, but must also roll an additional die called a Chaos Die. Do not apply this die towards the spell's Casting Number. Instead, it is used simply to increase the chances of Tzeentch's Curse. If the spellcaster does roll doubles, he also gains a side effect as if he had used *Dhar*.

— Warpstone Artefacts —

Warpstone is the cornerstone to Skaven magic. Sorcerers, Grey Seers, and even Plague Priests all tap into the resource to augment their spells, and the material also fuels their magical devices. Most Skaven magic items are weapons; they are a warlike race, after all. A few are protective devices, but these are rare since it is in the best interest of any Skaven to allow his fellows to perish so that he may climb to power.

Not all of these objects are fashioned by Warlock Engineer paws. A few hearken back to the earliest days of Skaven society, having changed hands for generations. These items are as fickle as the Skaven god, and are exceptionally dangerous to handle, let alone use.

Finally, the Skaven are never shy about appropriating items from their non-Skaven enemies. Many of the items that the Skaven now claim as their own were originally created by other races, but have since been lost to the Ratman hordes. To turn an adversary's weapons against him is an act of spite that all Skaven relish.

Amulet of the Horned One

Academic Knowledge: Magic

Powers: So long as the character wears the Amulet of the Horned One, he regains 1 Wound each hour. The user must continually wear the Amulet for an hour to gain its effects.

History: It is not clear from where the Amulet of the Horned One came. Some claim it is a gift from the Horned

One himself, and its history supports this view. It is said that the Amulet first appeared around the neck of the dreaded Scrench, a Seer Lord of no small skill. For as long as he wore it, he could survive the worst treacheries, recovering from knife wounds, spells, and even poisoning. One day, though, when confronted by a group of his students, he prepared to destroy them all when the Amulet vanished from around his neck. Fearing he had lost the favour of the Horned Rat, he tried to flee but fell to the wicked knives of his former apprentices. Since Scrench's death, the Amulet of the Horned One has changed hands many times, and most recently hangs from the neck of the infamous Grey Seer Thanquol himself.

Blade of Corruption

Academic Knowledge: Magic

Powers: The Blade of Corruption functions as a hand weapon. However, if the wielder inflicts a Wound with this weapon, his opponent must immediately make a Challenging (–10%) Toughness Test. On a failed test, the character takes an additional Damage 3 hit as the weapon's poison courses through his veins. If used by a non-Skaven, the Blade of Corruption slowly poisons its wielder. The victim must succeed on a Challenging (–10%) Toughness Test each time he uses it in combat. On a failed test, he reduces his Toughness Characteristic by –1d10%. If the Blade of Corruption reduces his Toughness to 0%, he dissolves into a sticky mess of pestilential goo.

History: The Blade of Corruption has long been a treasured artefact from the days when Clan Pestilens haunted the lands of Lustria. A vile weapon, it has a long wavy edge and drips a foul green fluid from its tip. The Skaven whisper that this weapon was forged in the earliest days of Skaven history and was cooled in the blood of Slann.

Cloak of Shadows

Academic Knowledge: Magic

Powers: While worn, any creatures that attack you using ranged weapons or magic missiles must first succeed on a Challenging (–10%) Will Power Test. On a failed test, the attacker must select a different target.

History: Woven from the hair of Clan Eshin murder victims, this long black cloak casts a pall over its wearer. Though ancient, the Cloak of Shadows has survived countless wars and attempts to kill its wearer. Stranger still, even though it has been cut, burned, and nearly incinerated, it always repairs itself. Some Skaven believe that the Cloak grows with each kill made by an Assassin Adept.

Dwarf-Slayer

Academic Knowledge: History

Powers: This hand weapon inflicts SB+3 Damage vs. Dwarfs. In addition, the Critical Value of any Critical Hits inflicted upon Dwarf targets is increased by +3.
If used by a non-Skaven, Dwarf-Slayer devours the mind of the wielder. Each time the user touches this weapon, he must succeed on a Challenging (–10%) Will Power Test or gain 1 Insanity Point. If the wielder gains 6 Insanity Points from this weapon, he automatically gains a terrible hatred of Dwarfs and must henceforth attack these creatures on sight.

History: The Dwarf Slayer is an ancient blade fashioned by the Skaven when they battled against the Dwarfs for control of the World's Edge Mountains. Against Dwarfs, it inflicts horrendous wounds. Its curved blade is deeply etched with epithets and curses against the Dwarfish race, and each engraving is filled with the dried blood of countless stout folk.

Fellblade

Academic Knowledge: History

Powers: The Fellblade is a sword with the Impact Quality that inflicts SB+1 Damage. Any Skaven wielding the Fellblade has his Strength Characteristic increased by +20%. Each round that a character wields the Fellblade, he must succeed at a Hard (–20%) Toughness Test or take a Damage 3 hit regardless of armour or Toughness Bonus. Non-Skaven must succeed at a Very Hard (–30%) Toughness Test or take a Damage 5 hit regardless of armour or Toughness Bonus.

History: In the dim days of Skaven history, the Ratmen waged war against Nagash. To aid in their efforts to destroy this vile Necromancer, they forged this wicked sword, blending Gromril stolen from Karak Azgal with Warpstone. The result of their horrid labours was this long-bladed sword. The weapon exudes power and malice, and those Skaven who use this weapon in battle are almost always consumed by the sword's hate.

The Foul Pendant

Academic Knowledge: Magic

Powers: Curls of green foul-smelling smoke rise from this blasphemous artefact, granting the wearer 2 Armour Points to all locations. The protection granted from this device overlaps with any armour worn.

History: Gifts from the Council of Thirteen to their most dedicated and accomplished followers, Foul Pendants often switch hands soon after they are awarded. They are tokens in the form of a simple rat skull strung upon an iron chain. Skaven who are blessed with a Foul Pendant are often singled out for special treatment by jealous rivals and covetous allies.

Staff of the Horned One

Academic Knowledge: Magic

Powers: The wielder of the Staff of the Horned One may cast an additional Lesser Magic Spell of his choosing. Once selected, the wielder cannot change the Lesser Magic Spell invested in the Staff. If the item changes owners, the new possessor selects a new Lesser Magic Spell.

History: This long staff is made of blackened wood and capped with a Warpstone symbol of the Lord of Decay. Believed to be the symbol of authority of the first Grey Seer, it has a long and colourful history, having changed

hands dozens of times since its creation. The Grey Seer Thanquol came into possession of this Staff early in his career after murdering his mentor and teacher.

Clan Skryre Technomancy

While there are arcane items aplenty in Skaven society, most of the objects that come to the surface are devices assembled by Warlock Engineers. Unreliable, dangerous, and thoroughly destructive, this equipment allows the Warlock Engineers to rival the might of the Grey Seers themselves, though they would never openly admit this.

Given the experimental nature of these devices, they have a tendency to explode at unexpected times, destroying as many Skaven as they do their enemies. Furthermore, these items are deeply infused with Warpstone and Warp energy, making handling such devices risky and often lethal. Handling an item that uses or incorporates Warpstone in its design is tantamount to coming in direct contact with the material itself. As a general rule, touching a Warpstone Artefact requires a non-Skaven character to make a Challenging (–10%) Toughness Test or gain 1d10/5 mutations.

In this chapter, we've seen a variety of Skaven devices from the warplock jezzails to the poisoned wind globe. While these common items are good examples of devices that work, they barely scratch the surface of the less reliable innovations found in the Clan Skryre Workshops. Skaven Player Characters who are members of Clan Skryre may want to bring their own strange ideas to life by constructing all manner of weird devices. While this is fine, it's important to note that building larger and stranger devices is beyond the scope of this game and best reserved for *Warhammer Fantasy Battles*. What follows are basic rules to construct Skaven technology of your own design.

Requirements

To construct a technological device, a Skaven must have the Trade (Engineering) Skill and the Warlock Engineering Talent. In addition, he must have an ample supply of Warpstone.

Design

The first step in building a new piece of technology is to determine what it should do. The more powerful the device, the more complicated and challenging the construction, so consider carefully the object's purpose. As a rule, it is better to make something that does just one thing rather than a device that does a number of things.

Malfunctions

The more powerful the device, the greater chance it has of malfunctioning. This is represented by malfunction—a value measured by a percentage chance that the object breaks. Add the malfunction numbers together to determine the final chance of breakage every time the device is used. Furthermore, while constructing the object, there's a good chance that you'll add a few more flaws through sloppy design. Each time you fail a Trade (Engineering) Test, you increase the malfunction chance by 1d10%. You can start over at any time, but Tokens used are wasted.

Existing Warp Technology

The described Clan Skryre devices are tried and true, with all the problems generally present in Skaven technology worked out. Though some of these devices may have their own drawbacks, they are not subject to the malfunction rules presented for new technology.

Cost

Building Warp devices uses a great deal of Warpstone. Each Trade Test requires 1 Warp Token. In addition, once assembled the device must rely on Warpstone for power. Each function lists the required amount of Warpstone per use. Note that 1 pound of Warpstone generates 4 tokens.

Encumbrance

Any given device has an encumbrance value of 1d10 × 5 per function.

Categories

A possible device falls into one or more of the following categories:

Characteristic, Skill, Talent, Warp, or Weapon

The category determines the base difficulty of the Trade (Engineering) Test. For devices that fall under more than one category (such as one that both improves a Characteristic and grants a Talent), use the harder difficulty. Furthermore, the more powerful the device, the more successes you need to complete its construction.

Characteristics—Hard (–20%)

There are two types of Characteristic functions. The first is that of a replacement body part. While relatively reliable, they wreak havoc with the subject's body and mind. Each replacement body part reduces the subject's Toughness by –1d10% and bestows Insanity Points depending on the effectiveness of the replacement part.

The second Characteristic function is augmentation. These devices improve a Skaven's existing abilities. For example, a Warp-steel arm frame might bestow a bonus to Strength Tests, while a Skaven thought multiplier might bolt onto a subject's head and grant a bonus to Intelligence Tests.

Characteristic functions can only alter Characteristics on the Main Profile. Using a Characteristic Device is a Free Action. Roll for malfunction whenever the device is used (essentially whenever called to make a Characteristic Test or associated Skill Test). You can halve the amount of Malfunction by imposing twice the bonus as a penalty to another Characteristic. If the penalty reduces the subject's Characteristic to 0% or lower, the subject explodes in a greasy mess of fur and gristle.

Table 6–6: Characteristic Functions

Function	Cost	Malfunction	Insanity
Replacement			
Increase by +1d10%	5	1%	3
Increase by +2d10%	10	1%	5
Increase by +3d10%	15	1%	8
Augmentation			
+10% bonus	3	2%	—
+20% bonus	6	3%	—
+30% bonus	12	6%	—

Table 6–7: Skill Functions

Function	Cost	Malfunction
Bestow Skill		
Basic	2	1%
+10%	4	2%
+20%	8	4%
+30%	16	8%
Advanced	4	2%
+10%	8	4%
+20%	16	8%
+30%	32	16%
Augment Skill		
General		
+10%	2	1%
+20%	4	2%
+30%	8	4%
Specific		
+10%	1	1%
+20%	2	2%
+30%	4	3%

Skill—Challenging (–10%)

Skaven technology can also provide skills or bonuses to skills. Like Characteristic functions, Skill functions fall into two categories. The first is Bestow Skill. Here, the user gains access to a new skill. The second is Skill Augmentation, providing a bonus to all or some Tests using a skill that the user already has. For instance, a device might confer a bonus to all Perception Tests or to listening-based Perception Tests. In the case of the former, this is called a General Skill Augmentation, and in the later, it is called a Specific Skill Augmentation.

You can halve the amount of Malfunction for General or Specific Skill Augmentations by imposing twice the bonus as a penalty to another Skill.

Table 6–8: Talent Functions

Function	Cost	Malfunction
Black Hunger*	4	4%
Flee!	3	3%
Fleet Footed	5	5%
Frenzy	4	4%
Frightening	6	6%
Hardy	5	5%
Hoverer	6	6%
Mighty Missile	5	5%
Mighty Shot	4	4%
Natural Weapons	5	5%
Night Vision	3	3%
Public Speaking	2	2%
Quick Draw	3	3%
Rapid Reload	3	3%
Resistance to Disease	4	4%
Resistance to Poison	4	4%
Skaven Construct*	10	**
Strike Mighty Blow	6	6%
Swashbuckler	5	5%
Unsettling	4	4%

*See **Chapter Seven: Skaven Characters** for details.
**When applied to another creature, this Talent is permanent and cannot be removed. There's a 50% chance that this Talent also provides the Unreliable Construct Talent* as well.

Table 6–9: Warp Functions

Function	Cost	Malfunction
Item's Magic Characteristic		
+1	5	3%
+2	10	5%
+3	15	8%
+4	20	10%
Armour of Darkness	5	2%
Black Whirlwind	10	5%
*Boon of Chaos**	5	3%
Crackling Doom	4	2%
*Dark Hand of Destruction**	9	5%
*Touch of Chaos**	10	5%
*Veil of Corruption**	12	6%
Warp Lightning	6	3%
Warp Storm	9	5%

*These spells appear in **Chapter Seven: Magic** in *WFRP*.

Of the skills in *WFRP*, only the following can be bestowed or augmented: Command, Concealment, Follow Trail, Hypnotism, Intimidate, Magical Sense, Navigation, Perception, Pick Lock, Prepare Poison, Scale Sheer Surface, Search, Silent Move, Speak Language, Swim, Torture, Trade, and Ventriloquism.

Talent—Hard (–20%)

Skaven devices can also grant use of certain talents. A device that grants the Frenzy Talent might inject the Skaven with stimulants, while a device that grants Night Vision might take the form of goggles. You cannot reduce the malfunction chance for these Talents.

Warp—Very Hard (–30%)

The very best Warlock Engineers use their talents to harness the latent dark energies found in Warpstone to produce nigh-magical effects. In effect, they gain powers akin to those trained in magic through the machines they construct. These objects essentially function like spells, requiring the user to throw Casting Dice to hit the spell's casting number. As with casting a spell, using these devices are extended actions (see *WFRP*, page 141) and each round spent using the device consumes the normal amount of Warpstone (see **Using the Device**, below).

When constructing a Warp device, you must first purchase a number of effective Magic Points contained within the object. These points are an inherent Magic Characteristic for determining how many dice are thrown during the Casting Roll. As with the casting of any spell, you are subject to Tzeentch's Curse. In fact, it's even worse for these devices: every time you make a Casting Roll, you must roll a number of dice equal to the Magic Characteristic (you can never use fewer dice).

At the GM's option, other spells may be available for Warp technological items. Generally speaking, the item's cost in Warpstone Tokens is half the Casting Number of the spell and the chance for malfunction is half the Warpstone Token cost. In both cases, round up.

Weapon—Average (+0%)

The Warlock Engineers of Clan Skryre are most famed for their weapons. Warplock jezzails and pistols, Poison Wind Globes, and a variety of other nefarious devices inspire terror in those who have faced the Skaven.

Within this category, you can do one of two things with weapons. First, you can upgrade an existing missile weapon,

6–10: Weapon Functions

Function	Cost	Malfunction
Upgrade		
Add Quality	10	5%
Increase Damage		
+1	10	5%
+2	20	10%
+3	30	15%
Range (per +2/4)	5	2%
New		
Per Quality	10	5%
Ranged Damage		
1	4	2%
2	8	4%
3	16	8%
4	32	16%
5	64	32%
Number of Hits		
1	—	—
2	8	4%
3	16	8%
4	32	16%
Area		
Single Target	—	—
Cone	10	5%
Small Template	10	5%
Large Template	20	10%
Range (per +2/4)	5	2%
Reload		
Half	20	10%
Full	10	5%
2 Full	5	3%
3 Full	2	1%
4 Full	1	1%

as with the warplock jezzail. Basically, you take an existing weapon and make it better. If you upgrade an existing weapon, it gains the unreliable quality. If the weapon already has the unreliable quality, it gains the experimental quality. If it already has the experimental quality, it jams if the attack roll is 90–97 and explodes on results of 98–00.

Second, you can build a weapon from scratch, as with the warpfire cannon. Have your GM assign the weapon to the appropriate group. Your GM may impose other expenses depending on the particular weapon you'd like to build.

Other Types

The categories described here are just the beginning of what can be constructed using Warlock Engineering. Your imagination is the only limit to what can be created. For example, you might be interested in creating a hand-held Farsqueaker device, one that would allow two Skaven to communicate over a vast distance. In this case, you'd have to determine the range of communication, the clarity of the transmitted signal, and the difficulty for creating this object. Sketch out your ideas and work with your GM to come up with a fair solution.

Building the Device

Once you determine all the functions the device should have, you need to make a series of Trade (Engineering) Tests to complete the object. The number of successful tests required equals the number of Warpstone Tokens used divided by 3 (round up, minimum 1 Test). Recall that every failed test increases the device's malfunction chance by +1d10%. Each Test counts as one day's work.

Using the Device

As mentioned, activating a device is a free action, but if it's a weapon, you'll still need to take the normal required actions (aiming and firing, swinging, etc.) to use it. Also, every warp device requires Warpstone to operate. The amount of Warpstone required per use is equal to one-quarter the total number of Warpstone Tokens invested in the object's creation (round up). You can feed as many Warpstone Tokens into the machine's hopper as you like.

Malfunctions

Any time the machine malfunctions, roll on the following table to see what happens.

Filling in the Blanks

Once you've built the device, your next step is to determine what it looks like, how it functions and what it's called. Use common sense as far as what it should look like, so don't, for example, have an item that improves one's sense of smell look like a pair of trousers. The device should be strange, unnerving, and full of pipes, hoses, whirly things, and gauges, none of which make sense to anyone except the builder.

As far as names go, use pseudo-scientific prefixes like super-, giga-, mega-, and so on, and attach them to other mechanical terms like accumulator, conductor, or transistor. Alternatively, you could name them after their function in a decidedly Skaven way. A device that aids in climbing might be called a Quickclimber or Heightreacher. Likewise, something that spews molten Warpstone could be called Man-thing mega-incinerator. Be creative, and a little silly.

Sample Device

Steve is playing a Clan Skryre Warlock Engineer named Kyrkil. To improve his standing in the group, he decides to make a special device for Slinock, his Clan Chief. He decides to create an object that improves Strength and that also sharpens his senses. So, consulting with his GM and the appropriate Tables, Steve sees he'll have to make Hard (–20%) Trade (Engineering) Tests—tough, but not impossible. And, if the device malfunctions while Slinock uses it, Kyrkil's character's station will simply increase. Kill-kill, quick-quick, and all that.

So, Steve defines the parameters of the device. First, it will have two functions, so it has an encumbrance of 2d10 × 5. Steve rolls an 11, so the item has 55 units of encumbrance . . . a little more bulky than a blunderbuss. Next, Steve decides this machine will improve the user's Strength Characteristic by +10% and provide a +20% bonus to all Perception Tests. Looking at **Table 6–7: Characteristic Functions**, he finds that the device's Strength increase function costs 3 Warpstone tokens and gives it a 2% chance of malfunction. Next he looks at **Table 6–8: Skill Functions**. To generally enhance a skill requires four more Warpstone tokens and increases the malfunction chance by 2%. So, this device will cost 7 Warpstone tokens and has a 4% malfunction chance.

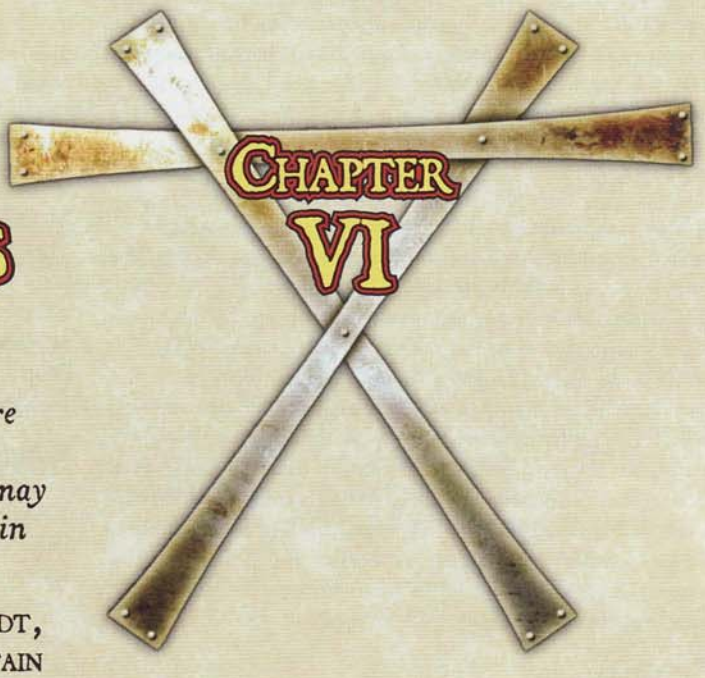
Steve calls the device the Strong-Smart Mega-Enhancer. It consists of a frame worn over both arms, each of which is connected to a hose that feeds into a generator that the Skaven wears on his back. Finally, small wires run from the generator directly into the Skaven's head to stimulate the proper portions of the brain for sensing attackers.

Now, all that's left is to make the skill tests. He divides the number of Warpstone tokens needed to build the item, 7, by 3, resulting in 2.3. Rounding up, he finds that it's going to take three successful tests to complete the construction over three days. He fails the first test, tacking another day onto the construction process and increasing the machine's malfunction by +1d10%. He rolls a 5 for the malfunction increase, then proceeds to succeed on his next three Trade (Engineering) Tests, allowing him to complete the machine. Kyrkil bestows the gift to Slinock and takes a frightened step back, bowing his head in deference. Slinock can now use the Strong-Smart Mega-Enhancer. It uses 2 Warpstone Tokens every time he uses it, so he makes sure to load it full before setting out. However, whenever he makes a Strength or Perception Test, there's a 9% (base 4% + 5% for the failed Trade test) chance that the device malfunctions.

6–11: Malfunctions

Roll	Result
01–10	*What's that smell?* The device works normally, but a component starts to smoulder. Increase malfunction chance by +1%.
11–20	*Is it hot in here?* The device works normally, but it catches fire. Make an Agility Test or you catch fire too. If extinguished in 1d10/2 rounds, it can be saved, only increasing the malfunction chance by 1d10/5%. Otherwise, it is ruined.
21–30	*Where does this piece go?* The device works normally, but spits out an important component. Increase malfunction chance by +1d10/2%
31–50	*Betrayed!* The item doesn't function this round.
51–60	*What in the name of the Horned God was THAT?* The device doesn't function this round, instead making a horrid sound and using twice the number of Warpstone Tokens.
61–70	*Stupid machine!* The device doesn't function this round, instead making a tremendous racket as something integral breaks. Increase malfunction chance by +1d10%
71–80	*Ouch!* The item bursts with a feeble explosion. Take a Damage 3 hit.
81–90	*Explosion!* The device explodes. Use the small template. All characters in the affected area take a Damage 4 hit that ignores armour.
91–00	*Massive Explosion!* The device explodes in a shower of green energy. Use the large template. All characters in the affected area take a Damage 5 hit that ignores armour.

Skaven Characters



"Listen up boys. In my experience, there are three types of Skaven: white ones, black ones, and everything else. Some may be big, some small, but all die covered in their own pi..."

—Final words of Gregor Schmidt, Sewer Jack Captain

Even for Old Worlders who believe in the existence of the Skaven menace, few would go so far as to attribute to these beasts the intelligence and personality of Humans. Skaven society does not celebrate individual worth, so those who interact with Skaven as individuals have a hard time noting distinct personality traits, and when a horde of fur, teeth and claws boils out of the bowels of a city, no one takes time to hold a conversation. This error of judgement is made by Humans time and again, and often enough leads to their downfall. For the Skaven are thinking things—hungry, intelligent, and deadly things. And underestimating them is the surest road to damnation.

— Roleplaying Skaven —

The Skaven are creatures of pure ego and selfishness motivated only by the fear of those above them in rank, the burning desire to replace those superiors with themselves, and a duty to exterminate all races not their own. They have little consideration for anything beyond these goals—no honour, no courage, no sense of decency or justice, and absolutely no ethics.

Which are, of course, the opposite of characteristics commonly found in heroic characters in a roleplaying game: a sense of honour, courage under fire, a devotion to something greater, and a firm dedication to teamwork and collaboration. Playing a Skaven means forgetting all that. It means caring only about your own measly hide. It means being cowardly, craven and despicable. It means stabbing your buddy in the back.

Quick-quick! Move-move! The man-thing looks away. Strike now!

—Snickitch, Clawleader

Oh most rotten of hearts, eater of cheese, ye of great and circular intellect, I quail before you and your almost majesty. Have mercy on our poor retched hides, for we are beneath contempt, too insignificant to be struck down by you vast-vast power . . .

—Typical Clanrat address to a Grey Seer

"Yes, of course I understand. Just be sure . . . be sure . . . to hide this. If it came out . . . well, I'd be ruined."

"Yes-maybe, man-thing. We hide-reveal secrets. You serve-obey us, we reward."

—Eyewitness account of some shadowy transaction

It's important, therefore, to ensure that any antagonism in a Skaven campaign is kept between characters and not players. Before you do anything, everyone at the table needs to understand and accept the kind of moral backsliding involved. Otherwise, miscommunications can occur, and feelings might get hurt. However, having established this, you are free to give in to your baser desires, which is what makes playing a Skaven so much fun.

If you are a GM, you have nothing to worry about because you are used to giving into your baser desires. But for players and GMs alike, it

isn't always easy to bring the psychology of a character off the page and into the game. To help get you started, here is a list of some of the major aspects of most Skaven characters, as well as the ways in which they are expressed in their actions and choices.

Squeak

Nobody wants to spend the entire session talking in a high pitched squeaking voice, but a distinctive Skaven voice can go along way to establishing mood. Whining is good if you can keep it from being annoying; equally suitable are a scratchy hiss, a snarling growl or an excited whisper. Remember the nature of the Skaven language, as well: use lots of short, sharp sentences rather than one long one, and repeat words to indicate emphasis. Skaven also speak rapidly and typically skip all but the most essential elements of their messages—not because they're dour like the Dwarfs, but because they're trying to talk as fast as they think. They also don't talk about anything else except what's immediately important. The Skaven are pragmatists, and they live in the moment. Keep everything short, punchy and relevant.

Cower

In the Skaven mindset, nothing is of value except your life and your status, and these two things are constantly threatened. So the Skaven are constantly afraid, and tend to be inveterate cowards. Even the slightest hint of a changing of the odds in the enemies' favour (even if it is just a bad omen) can cause them to fret, panic, or abandon their mission altogether. Your typical Skaven is incredibly paranoid, seeing hidden enemies everywhere and certain doom at every turn.

Of course, just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they aren't out to get you. At any moment a Skaven may be challenged or assassinated by an underling, or demoted by a superior, or sacrificed against impossible odds on the whim of the Lords of Decay. A Skaven's life is cheap, and every one of his fellow Ratmen is ready and willing to end it. Especially his Clanmates.

This fear does not completely paralyse the Skaven, however. They still attack superior odds or charge into certain slaughter if the circumstances, the Musk, or a superior demand it. Just be sure that such acts are not done out of any sort of bravery or sense of duty, but rather out of fear of the punishment for failure, due to mindless instinct and blood rage, or due to outright arrogance or stupidity.

Sniff

Being cowards, Skaven almost never rush into things. Not when they can make someone else rush into things first (which is why they prefer to lead from the back). This is true on both a military scale and a personal scale. In the former case, the Skaven never attack without acquiring as much intelligence as possible. They watch a target for weeks or even months, learning everything they can and putting their plans into action with great slowness and infinite patience. This way, they ensure that they won't be observed, and when the trap finally closes—months or even years later—no one sees it coming.

On a personal level, the Skaven always take a sniff around a corner before turning it, for who knows who or what might be waiting there? Likewise, they rarely take action without considering all the possible outcomes and other options. They often delay their first actions in a combat to wait and watch their opponents, so they can best decide whether to fight or run. At the back of a Skaven's mind, there is always the question "What's in it for me?" If the answer isn't one he likes, or if there is too much of a risk of harm or hindrance, he won't immediately go forward—and he may even go backwards.

Spit

For a Skaven, nothing is ever as it should be. If things were as they should be, he would be ruling the world on the bones of the lesser races, with a score of breeding females at his beck and call. But luckily, he's not to blame for this unfortunate state of affairs.

How can he be, after all, when the Skaven are the master race, and he is the greatest example of that race? No, it is most likely the fault of the lesser races. They constantly refuse to recognise the greatness of the Skaven. They refuse to die swiftly when attacked, and sometimes even insist on fighting back. This is terribly frustrating, especially when they win.

To the Skaven, the lesser races are a tide of vermin, existing only to ruin their plans. Thus a Skaven is filled with a fiery hatred for every other race, and an unending fury to teach them their proper places (which are either dead or in their belly). They consider it an insult to be attacked by them, and even in their death throes they will not stop spitting out their hatred for the inferior scum that brought them down.

Whine

Of course, it is not always the fault of the lesser races that things go wrong. Much of the time, there is someone else to blame: your fellow Skaven. After all, if something does go wrong, it can't be your fault, because you are the greatest Skaven who has ever lived. The only other explanation, then, is that one of your superiors or inferiors is working against you.

Any setback, therefore, may start a Skaven into a long and detailed whine about how the cause of this and every other problem is his Skaven enemies. If a squad is routed, it is the fault of the Clanrats' cowardice, or the cheating Pawleader from whom they were purchased. If a tunnelling party gets lost, it is the fault of the foolish Lords of Decay for providing a poor map in an attempt to lead you to your doom. If it rains too much, or the wells dry up, or it is too hot, or too cold, it is the fault of meddling Grey Seers, trying to crush your spirit with black magic.

Everything is a plot, a scheme designed by your legion of enemies, for the sole goal of hurting you, personally. If things were fair, if things were different, if only your enemies' bones were dust beneath your feet and their servants your slaves, if you were in charge of running things, if you didn't have to deal with all the other stupid, weak and duplicitous Skaven that surround you . . . if all of those things were the case, then nothing would ever go wrong, and none of whatever trouble you're in would ever have happened.

Scrape

Of course, when your superiors are present, you can't say all this. Instead, you must bow and scrape to them, lest they discover your plans to bring them down. Flattery is also important, although it shouldn't be flowery—a simple recognition of their greatness fits better with the Skaven's clipped language. There is no shame or insult in this deference, however. Your masters have proven their superiority to you, and as such it is your duty to be below them and their right to treat you as worthless. The aim of the Skaven is not to throw off the oppression of his masters, but to become them. Until such time, it is prudent and natural to suffer the consequences of your lower rank. It is also prudent and natural, however, to find every way possible to lessen the worst of these consequences, or to pass them down onto your own underlings.

Chew

Speaking of underlings, it is a Skaven's duty to treat lower Ratmen as harshly as possible. They would do nothing less if they were in your position, and there is nothing to be gained by being kind. A Skaven's troops should live in fear of their master's smell, and with the constant knowledge he is above them in all ways. What is more, should they ever even consider thinking otherwise, or failing to follow orders, they must know your vengeance will be swift, brutal, absolute and terrifying. Of course, truly excessive cruelty can also provide too much motivation for rebellion. The desired balance is to ensure that underlings fear terrible retribution if they cross you, yet also believe they are better off with you than anyone else. This makes them afraid to consider assassination, and even those who consider it are more likely to squabble over who will lead afterwards than to actually carry out their plans.

Preen

A wise Skaven does not bring too much attention to his self, lest he become too tempting a target to his underlings or too dangerous a risk to his superiors. However, it is important that your underlings understand how much better you are than them, and your superiors understand how essential you are to making them look good. Skaven have a natural tendency to believe in their own greatness.

So, just as all failures are due to the weaknesses or plots of others, all successes are in fact due to your incredible talents. If an assault group decimates the enemy, it is because of your brilliant planning. If a tunnelling squad emerges in the right place, it is because your genius intellect found the correct path. Whenever it is the right time, the right place, the right weather—this is just more proof that you are a master of strategy, logistics, and everything else.

Mark

With greater status in Skaven society comes greater access to food, possessions, slaves and living space. It is therefore important to let everyone know exactly what belongs to you, as these positions indicate your status. The more things you mark and the stronger you mark them, the more people learn of your greatness, so be sure to always make clear what is yours. Obviously, anything you can find that isn't marked by a superior is automatically yours. This is particularly true of anything owned by the lesser races, including the races themselves, should you want some slaves.

Devour

The Skaven appetite is a harsh mistress, and a Skaven is never sure when his next meal will come. So anything he finds that he can eat, he will eat, preferably as soon and as fast as possible. Skaven can digest almost anything, and will frequently do so, but they prefer fresh meat most of all. This is another reason that they like to take captives and slaves, as they provide portable fresh food if nothing else is available. Otherwise, they eat every animal they find, and the passing of their armies leave behind nothing but bones.

Survive

Although the Skaven like to kill and eat everything in their way, they are not creatures of berserker rage like the Beastmen. They are cool and calculating, or at least subtle and sly, and any violence they do always has a greater purpose. Nor are they truly cowards: they simply refuse to risk their lives in the unpredictability of battle unless they are sure of winning. The Skaven are not the strongest of races, and so they have learned to out-think their opponents. A Skaven almost never gives up his life willingly. He always attempts to flee to fight another day, or offers a bargain, or volunteers to become a slave or prisoner. Likewise, there's always some way to get out of

dangerous duties like working the ratling gun, or to pass them on to someone else. To a Skaven, nothing is worth dying for, for where there's life, there's hope for revenge.

Lie

In a world where everyone you know is out to stab you in the back, the Skaven have learned to be subtle and cunning. They cannot hope to overthrow larger rats with force, nor openly plot against their superiors. So the Skaven hide their plans, and build plans on top of those plans, and couch everything they do in lies and deception. A clever Skaven never attacks anyone directly, because it is too risky and exposes his true position. Rather, he makes bargains, forges alliances and uses trickery, so when the final blow falls, it falls with all the weight of numbers behind it and with as little risk as possible. To help with this, Skaven quickly learn to never tell the whole truth, because you never know when you'll need to hide something and because you never want your enemies to be too well informed. And when you're a Skaven, everyone is your enemy.

— Creating Skaven Characters —

Adding a Skaven Player Character to an adventuring party of Old Worlders would be disastrous; Skaven do not get along well with other races. However, a group comprised exclusively of Skaven makes for an interesting experience, one full of intrigue and treachery. Parties of Skaven must not only contend with other horrors, but must also face their own kind, not to mention each other. Such games are true tests of roleplaying, where players put aside their friendships to enter the paranoid world of the Under-Empire.

Race

To the casual observer, it may seem like the differences between the Skaven are superficial. One might have blotchy fur, another white, another black fur. Some Skaven are bigger than others, and some have horns or other mutations. But to the Dwarf's axe, they all squeal the same when the blade falls.

Within Skaven society, however, issues of colouring and size are important distinctions, revealing the individual Ratman's potential and capabilities. A white or grey-furred Skaven is vastly superior to others of his kind, gifted with the ear of the Horned Rat and the power of his divine might. Black-furred Skaven are larger, tougher, and more deadly. And what of the rest? Brown, red, beige, and all the other fur colours in between make up the teeming masses of Clanrats, slaves, and chattel that support the Under-Empire.

GM Rule: Favour of the Horned Rat

For parties of Skaven, *Children of the Horned Rat* adds an additional mechanic. At the start of every game, have all players at the table write down their name and a number from 1 to 10 (they may share their selection or keep it secret, though Skaven characters should be suspicious of such outward acts of cooperation). Have them turn their selection in and, then secretly roll 1d10. Player Characters whose number matches the die result gain the Favour of the Horned Rat, though be sure to keep all successes secret. At any point during the game session, a Skaven player may call upon the Favour of the Horned Rat to achieve any of the effects ordinarily gained by expending a Fortune Point. However, only a character who actually has the Favour derives the benefit. During the course of play, another character can take the Favour of the Horned Rat by killing a Skaven character who has it. Of course, killing a character who does not have the Favour of the Horned Rat may or may not (at the GM's discretion) warrant gaining the Favour. Betrayals such as these are heartily rewarded by the Dark God of the Skaven, and the more clever and nasty the betrayal, the more the Horned Rat laughs.

The Chosen

When a Ratmother births a white or grey Ratman with small nubs on its head, it is always an auspicious event, a sign of the Horned Rat's favour. These pups are taken to a special crèche where they are raised in seclusion from the rest of Skaven society. Their path is set. From their first tottering steps onwards to adulthood, they are trained in the arts of the Warp, learning the dogma of the Horned Rat and the manifestation of his will—magic. As they grow older, the nubs grow into horns akin to those of the Horned Rat himself.

Though they enjoy an exalted status, Grey Seers are no more safe from the treachery that makes up the foundations of Skaven culture. They must contend with the capricious will of their masters and the treachery of their fellow apprentices, and they constantly strive to remain in the favour of their god. One misstep means death.

Racial Features

A white or grey-furred Skaven gains the following skills and talents:

Skills: Common Knowledge (Skaven), Perception, Speak Language (Queekish)
Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Coolheaded, Night Vision, Petty Magic (Warp), Savvy
Special: Your first career must be Apprentice Grey Seer.

The Mighty

Those Skaven born with black fur are also separated from their birth clans. Brought to a separate nursery, they are raised to become the terrifying Stormvermin, the best trained warriors in the Under-Empire. Because they are separated from their Clan, they are loyal to whomever they are assigned by the Council of Thirteen, whether it be a Clan Chieftain or Grey Seer.

Table 7–1: Starting Clans

Roll	Clan	Benefit
01–05	Eshin	Gain Concealment and Silent Move; Hand Weapon, 1d10/5 + 1 Warpstone Tokens
06–10	Moulder	Gain Animal Training and Command; Hand Weapon, Leather Jerkin, 1d10/5 Warpstone Tokens
11–15	Pestilens	Gain Academic Knowledge (Theology) and Dodge Blow; Hand Weapon, Maggots, 1d10/5 Warpstone Tokens
16–20	Skryre	Gain Scale Sheer Surface and Silent Move; Hand Weapon, 1d10+2/4 Warpstone Tokens
21–30	Flem	Gain Concealment; Hand Weapon
31–40	Mors	Gain Command and Prepare Poison; Hand Weapon
41–50	Skab	Gain Hardy; Hand Weapon
51–60	Skaar	Gain Trade (Miner); Hand Weapon
61–70	Skaul	Gain Resistance to Poison; Hand Weapon
71–80	Sleekit	Gain Navigation; Hand Weapon
81–90	Verms	Gain Outdoor Survival; Hand Weapon
91–00	Minor Clan	Hand Weapon

Table 7–2: Characteristic Generation

Characteristic	Chosen	Mighty	Common
Weapon Skill (WS)	10 + 2d10	30 + 2d10	20 + 2d10
Ballistic Skill (BS)	10 + 2d10	20 + 2d10	20 + 2d10
Strength (S)	20 + 2d10	30 + 2d10	20 + 2d10
Toughness (T)	25 + 2d10	30 + 2d10	25 + 2d10
Agility (Ag)	25 + 2d10	20 + 2d10	25 + 2d10
Intelligence (Int)	30 + 2d10	15 + 2d10	20 + 2d10
Will Power (WP)	25 + 2d10	20 + 2d10	15 + 2d10
Fellowship (Fel)	20 + 2d10	10 + 2d10	10 + 2d10
Attacks (A)	1	1	1
Wounds (W)	—Roll 1d10 and consult **Table 7–3: Starting Wounds**—		
Strength Bonus (SB)	—Equal to the first digit of your Strength Characteristic—		
Toughness Bonus (TB)	—Equal to the first digit of your Toughness Characteristic—		
Movement (M)	4	5	5
Magic (Mag)	1	0	0
Insanity Points (IP)	0	0	0
Fate Points (FP)	—Roll 1d10 and consult **Table 7–4: Starting Fate Points**—		

Racial Features

A black-furred Skaven gains the following skills and talents:

Skills: Common Knowledge (Skaven), Perception, Speak Language (Queekish), Swim
Talents: Coolheaded, Night Vision, Sturdy
Special: Your first career must be Black Skaven.

The Common

Most Skaven fall into this category. Born with little to distinguishing features, the powers that be see them as merely part of a horde of worthless fur and flesh whose only purpose is to serve their Chieftains as Clanrats or to serve their society as slaves.

Racial Features

A common Skaven gains the following skills and talents:

Skills: Common Knowledge (Skaven), Perception, Speak Language (Queekish), Swim
Talents: Night Vision

Starting Clans

For Skaven, Clan allegiance is almost as important as fur colouring. Certainly, the inbreeding within Clans produce unusual physical side-effects (Clan Pestilens are almost always malformed, while Clan Eshin are always a shade darker than other Skaven), but loyalties and conflicts between competing Clans are far more important. Furthermore, Skaven of the Great Clans have access to more resources than other Ratmen, granting them natural advantages over their kin. Skaven who

Table 7–3: Starting Wounds

d10 Roll	Chosen	Mighty	Common
1–3	9	11	8
4–6	10	12	9
7–9	11	13	10
10	12	14	11

Table 7–4: Starting Fate Points

d10 Roll	Chosen	Mighty	Common
1–4	1	0	0
5–7	2	1	0
8–10	3	2	1

are neither Mighty nor Chosen must roll on **Table 7–1: Clan Affiliation** to determine their affiliation and what benefits, if any, they gain. These Skaven gain a +10% bonus to Common Knowledge (Skaven) Tests involving the Clan of their birth. For details on the particular Clans, see **Chapter III: Skaven Society**.

Generating Race

Unlike normal *WFRP* games, racial selection is not up to you. The Horned Rat makes all decisions regarding this matter. Each player rolls a 1d10. If he rolls a "1," he may choose his starting race. Otherwise, all starting characters are common, brown-furred Skaven. A player who rolled a "1" can give up his opportunity to select a Chosen or Mighty Skaven, giving that opportunity to another player in exchange for in-game favours, oaths, or trades. The GM must be aware of all deals, for players making the offer and not abiding by the terms stand to face severe repercussions (essentially, they can never gain the Favour of the Horned Rat; see page 92). Alternatively, if the player who rolled the 1 selects a Chosen, he may automatically promote any other character to Mighty to serve as his bodyguard.

Fate of the Weak

Weak Skaven rarely survive to adulthood, being eaten, murdered, enslaved, or sacrificed to the Horned God. As a result, you may replace any one Characteristic from your main profile with the average result for your race. This is handled in the same way as Shallya's Mercy (see *WFRP*, page 19).

— Skaven Careers —

For ordinary Skaven foes played by the GM, the Brute, Sneak and Chief are fine templates. However, Skaven Player Characters have access to as wide a variety of opportunities as characters of other races. If you wound up with a Common Skaven, roll for your starting career on **Table 7–5: Skaven Starting Careers**. If your roll indicates a career exclusive to a Clan you are not a member of, you begin play as a Slave owned by that Clan (for instance, if you are Clan Skaar and rolled Night Runner, you'd become a Slave owned by Clan Eshin). Otherwise, Chosen Skaven begin play as Apprentice Grey Seers and Mighty Skaven begin play as Black Skaven. Check with your GM about the appropriateness of using other careers.

In the career descriptions below, talents marked with a * are new talents described thereafter.

Basic Careers

Apprentice Grey Seer

Description: Every once in a great while, a Ratman is born with small nubs on its brow and white or grey fur. Separated from the rest of the litter, this mewling horror's course is set. Ahead lay a life filled with brutal training, but also one of excess and comfort. These rare Skaven are living symbols of the Great Rat's favour, manifest as the ability to master the magic of the Warp.

As the grow and develop their talents, these Skaven owe no allegiance to any particular Clan, but rather serve as advisors to, or more often as outright masters of, the lesser members of their kind. Commanding through fear, they make examples of treacherous thoughts and acts by destroying the guilty in the most excruciating ways.

While clearly blessed with power, an Apprentice Grey Seer has no guarantee of survival. Established Grey Seers look for any excuse to destroy these upstarts, killing them with the slightest provocation. As a result, Apprentice Grey Seers break with their masters as early as they can, teaching themselves what else they must to survive until they can prove themselves as capable as their masters.

— Apprentice Grey Seer Advance Scheme —

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+5%	+5%	—	—	+10%	+10%	+15%	+5%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+3	—	—	—	+1	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Magic), Channelling, Common Knowledge (Skaven), Magical Sense, Perception, Read/Write, Search, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (any one)

Talents: Fast Hands, Lesser Magic (any two), Public Speaking, Savvy *or* Suave

Trappings: Grey Robes, Quarter Staff, 2 Warpstone tokens

Career Entries: None

Career Exits: Grey Seer, Scribe

Black Skaven

Description: Black Skaven is a catch-all category for those Skaven born heavier, larger, and far more powerful than the ordinary Ratman. This breed of Skaven has dark, if not black, fur, and fierce features. Almost all Black Skaven train to join the ranks of

the illustrious Stormvermin. Until then, they guard Apprentice Grey Seers, Clawleaders, and other figures of minor import.

— Black Skaven Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10%	—	+5%	+5%	+10%	—	+5%	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Dodge Blow, Intimidate

Talents: Hardy, Lightning Reflexes *or* Very Resilient, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow

Trappings: Great Weapon, Light Armour (Leather Jack and Leather Skullcap)

Career Entries: —

Career Exits: Mercenary, Outlaw, Pit Fighter, Stormvermin

Clanrat

Description: Whether working in the great and awful factories of the Under-Empire or serving on the front lines of a strike force to invade a town or even city, Clanrats are the heart of Skaven society. By far the most populous and varied, Clanrats serve in a variety of roles, from toiling alongside the Skaven's slaves to serving as spies for a Grey Seer or as foot soldiers in a Clan Warlord's horde.

Clanrat warriors (the majority of those Skaven who have this career) may not have to contend with malfunctioning equipment and long spirit-crushing labour, but they are the front ranks of the Skaven host. It is these warriors who are commanded (from the rear, of course) to blunder through the shadowy byways into Human cities, boiling up to tear apart the weaker races. Shamefully, they are also just as likely to die as sacrifices or decoys as they are as warriors, so long as their deaths fulfil the needs of mad plans hatched by the Warlords or Grey Seers.

Life as a Clanrat is short and brutish, being filled with wants and desires, hunger, pain, and fear. Very few survive for long, but those who do may, depending on their fortunes, be elevated to positions of responsibility, becoming Clawleaders, Skirmishers, and so on. The unlucky ones are sent to Clan Moulder for experimentation and mutation or to the Grey Seers as sacrifices.

Clanrats are common in almost every clan except Clan Eshin and Clan Pestilens. Both of these Clans have specialised warriors with whom to shoulder the burden of advancing one's

Table 7–5: Skaven Starting Career

Roll	Career (Clan restriction, if any)	Skaven Exits
01	Agitator	Clanrat, Outlaw, Rogue, Slave, Zealot
02	Barber-Surgeon	Interrogator, Grave Robber, Slave, Vagabond
03	Boatman (Sleekit)	Clanrat, Navigator, Slave, Smuggler
04–05	Bodyguard	Bounty Hunter, Interrogator, Jailer, Mercenary, Slave
06	Bone Picker	Clanrat, Fence, Grave Robber, Slave, Smuggler
07	Bounty Hunter	Mercenary, Packmaster, Scout, Slave
08–50	Clanrat	New, see entry
51	Grave Robber	Slave, Thief
52	Hunter	Mercenary, Packmaster, Slave
53	Jailer	Bodyguard, Clanrat, Interrogator, Slave, Watchman
54–55	Mercenary	Hunter, Night Runner (Eshin), Slave, Veteran
56–57	Messenger	Clanrat, Scout, Slave
58–60	Miner	Clanrat, Mercenary, Scout, Slave
61–65	Night Runner (Eshin)	New, see entry
66	Outlaw	Slave, Thief, Vagabond, Veteran
67–71	Packmaster (Moulder)	New, see entry
72–76	Plague Monk (Pestilens)	New, see entry
77	Servant	Agitator, Messenger, Slave, Spy, Thief
78–80	Skirmisher (Skryre)	New, see entry
81–85	Slave	New, see entry
86	Smuggler	Boatman, Slave, Thief
87–88	Thief	Clanrat, Night Runner (Eshin), Slave, Tomb Robber
89–90	Thug	Bodyguard, Clanrat, Interrogator, Mercenary, Night Runner (Eshin), Slave
91	Tomb Robber	Slave, Thief
92–94	Tradesman	Clanrat, Engineer, Skirmisher (Skryre), Slave
95	Vagabond	Clanrat, Scout, Slave, Thief
96–99	Watchman	Clanrat, Mercenary, Skirmisher (Skryre), Slave, Tradesman
100	Zealot	Agitator, Censer Bearer (Pestilens), Outlaw, Slave

station. If you are a Skaven from Clan Eshin, you may swap this career for Night Runner. Likewise, if you are a member of Clan Pestilens, you can swap Clanrat for Plague Monk.

— Clanrat Advance Scheme —

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+5%	+5%	—	—	+5%	—	+5%	—
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Common Knowledge (Skaven), Concealment, Outdoor Survival, Scale Sheer Surface, Silent Move

Talents: Specialist Weapon Group (Sling), Tunnel Rat

Trappings: Light Armour (Leather Jack and Leather Skullcap), Hand Weapon, Dagger *or* Sling, Shield

Career Entries: Agitator, Boatman, Jailer, Messenger, Miner, Slave, Thief, Thug, Tradesman, Vagabond, Watchman

Career Exits: Barber-Surgeon, Bodyguard, Bone Picker, Bounty Hunter, Censer Bearer, Clawleader, Grave Robber, Jailer, Mercenary, Night Runner, Outlaw, Packmaster, Plague Monk, Skirmisher, Slave, Thief, Thug, Tomb Robber, Tradesman, Vagabond, Zealot

Night Runner

Description: The mainstay warriors of Clan Eshin are the Night Runners. What differentiates these expendable foot soldiers from other Clanrats is that they receive rudimentary training in the fighting styles learned from distant Cathay. Faster than the ordinary Clanrat, they kill quickly so they can move on to eliminate their next foes. Those Night Runners who prove their mettle sometimes rise to become Gutter Runners.

Only members of Clan Eshin may become Night Runners.

— Night Runner Advance Scheme —

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10%	+10%	—	+5%	+10%	—	+5%	—
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Common Knowledge (Skaven), Concealment, Dodge Blow, Navigation, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Scale Sheet Surface, Silent Move

Talents: Fleet-Footed, Orientation, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Sling) *or* Specialist Weapon Group (Throwing), Tunnel Rat

Trappings: Light Armour (Leather Jerkin), 2 Hand Weapons, Sling *or* 4 Throwing Stars

Career Entries: Clanrat, Mercenary, Thief, Thug

Career Exits: Bodyguard, Bounty Hunter, Clawleader, Gutter Runner, Mercenary, Outlaw, Slave, Smuggler, Sorcerer, Thief, Vagabond

Packmaster

Description: Packmasters are Skaven overseers responsible for corralling and controlling the monsters created by the Master Moulders. Most Packmasters prod and control Rat Swarms and Giant Rats, driving them into the teeth of their enemies. Others are charged with controlling the dreaded Rat Ogres. Eventually, most Packmasters wind up as meals for their charges.

Only members of Clan Moulder may become Packmasters.

— Packmaster Advance Scheme —

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+5%	—	+5%	+5%	+5%	+5%	+10%	+5%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+3	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Animal Training, Command, Common Knowledge (Skaven), Concealment, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Scale Sheer Surface, Silent Move

Talents: Master of the Lash*, Specialist Weapon Group (Entangling), Tunnel Rat

Trappings: Light Armour (Leather Jack and Leather Skullcap), Hand Weapon, Whip, Thing-Catcher, 1 Giant Rat

Career Entries: Bounty Hunter, Clanrat, Hunter

Career Exits: Bounty Hunter, Clawleader, Master Moulder, Mercenary, Slave, Thug, Vagabond

Plague Monk

Description: Plague Monks are the grunt troops of Clan Pestilens. Fully in the thrall of the perverse teachings of the Plague Priests, these wretched Skaven are filthy decrepit things, often crawling with vermin and infected with some awful rotting disease. Most Plague Monks succumb to their afflictions before ever facing their enemies in battle. They

are easy to identify, as they wrap themselves in filthy bandages and are surrounded by clouds of flies that feast on their leprous hides.

Only members of Clan Pestilens may become Plague Monks.

— Plague Monk Advance Scheme —							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10%	—	+5%	+10%	+5%	—	+10%	+5%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology), Common Knowledge (Skaven), Concealment, Dodge Blow, Outdoor Survival, Scale Sheer Surface, Silent Move

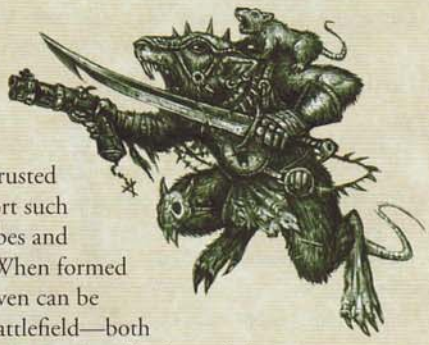
Talents: Fearless, Frenzy, Resistance to Disease, Tunnel Rat

Trappings: 2 Hand Weapons, Disease (GM's choice), Maggots, 3d10 Flies

Career Entries: Clanrat

Career Exits: Censer Bearer, Clawleader, Interrogator, Plague Deacon, Slave, Zealot

Skirmisher



Description: Among the Clanrats of Clan Skryre, a few are entrusted with devices of import such as Poison Wind Globes and Warplock firearms. When formed into units, these Skaven can be devastating on the battlefield—both to themselves and their enemies. The best of these are ushered into the higher secrets of the Warlock Engineers, though such promotions are rare.

Only members of Clan Skryre may become Skirmishers.

— Skirmisher Advance Scheme —							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+5%	+10%	—	—	+10%	+10%	+5%	—
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Engineering), Common Knowledge (Skaven), Concealment, Outdoor Survival, Scale Sheer Surface, Silent Move

Talents: Master Gunner, Rapid Reload, Specialist Weapon Group (Gunpowder), Tunnel Rat

Trappings: Light Armour (Leather Jerkin), Hand Weapon, Warplock Jezzail *or* 2 Warplock Pistols *or* 2 Poison Wind Globes

Career Entries: Clanrat, Tradesman, Watchman

Career Exits: Bodyguard, Clawleader, Engineer, Mercenary, Pistolier, Tradesman

Slave

Description: Without Slaves, Skaven society would collapse. These miserable wretches are bought and sold for Warpstone Tokens on the slave blocks in the major communities of the Under-Empire. When they arrive at their new homes they find endless toil and pain: clearing new tunnels, feeding the Rat Ogres, becoming food for their masters, and serving as test subjects for some new Clan Skryre or Clan Moulder enterprise are only a few of the many possible fates that await Skaven Slaves.

— Slave Advance Scheme —							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+5%	—	+5%	+5%	+10%	—	+5%	—
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Blather, Common Knowledge (Skaven), Concealment, Perception, Search, Speak Language (Queekish)

Talents: Acute Hearing *or* Excellent Vision, Flee! *or* Hardy, Natural Weapons

Trappings: None

Career Entries: All

Career Exits: Clanrat, Clawleader, or Any (see special rules).

Special Rules: Unlike all the other new careers described in this chapter, any race can automatically enter this career. It costs no experience points to enter, merely the circumstances of enslavement. Any character enslaved by the Skaven must succeed on a Will Power Test each week of enslavement, or immediately exit their current career and assume this one. Non-Skaven Slaves must stay in this career until they somehow find a way to escape captivity. Assuming they do, they can attempt a Will Power Test each week thereafter. A successful Test allows them to resume their previous careers.

Advanced Careers

Skaven are cunning, but few are lucky enough to survive the tempestuous political manoeuvrings of the Skaven underworld. Even those who do manage to creep up the chains of power to carve a spot of their own must always watch out for those who would supplant them. Skaven with any of the following careers are therefore exceedingly rare.

Censer Bearer

Description: One of the highest honours accorded to Clan Pestilens Skaven is the right to bear the Plague Censer. This awful weapon is functionally a flail, but instead of a solid ball, it has a censer at the end of the chain. The Plague Priests load the censer with Warpstone and materials infected with disease. The Censer Bearer ignites the contents and charges into battle, swinging this cursed tool with wild abandon, spreading woe and suffering to all he strikes. The honour of wielding this weapon is a death sentence, however, as the Censer Bearer is always exposed to the worst of the fumes.

Only members of Clan Pestilens may become Censer Bearers.

— Censer Bearer Advance Scheme —

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+25%	—	+25%	+20%	+10%	—	+25%	—
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+6	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Dodge Blow, Intimidate, Outdoor Survival, Perception

Talents: Black Hunger*, Fearless, Frenzy, Hardy, Menacing, Resistance to Disease, Specialist Weapon Group (Flail), Strike Mighty Blow, Warrior Born

Trappings: 2 Hand Weapons, Plague Censer, 2 Warpstone Tokens

Career Entries: Clanrat, Plague Monk, Zealot

Career Exits: Becoming a Censer Bearer is the greatest honour Clan Pestilens awards. The only escape from this career is death.

Clan Chieftain

Description

Clan Chieftains control a segment of the larger Clan. Where a Clan might have representation in one Under-Empire city, the Chieftain receives instructions from his Warlord and master. Though still subservient to another more powerful Skaven, within their demesne they have nigh absolute authority. Those Clan Chieftains who prove themselves may one day rise to become Warlords themselves, supplanting their masters and perhaps even gaining a seat on the Council of Thirteen. While all Clan Chieftains believe this is their right and due, few survive long enough to achieve such lofty goals.

— Clan Chieftain Advance Scheme —

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+40%	+30%	+30%	+30%	+40%	+30%	+20%	+25%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+2	+6	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History *or* Strategy/Tactics), Blather, Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (any three), Dodge Blow, Evaluate, Gossip, Intimidate, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Read/Write, Scale Sheer Surface, Speak Language (any three)

Talents: Disarm *or* Quick Draw, Lightning Parry, Master Orator, Menacing, Public Speaking, Sixth Sense *or* Very Resilient, Specialist Weapon Group (any two), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun

Trappings: Medium Armour (Full Mail Armour), Shield, 12Warpstone Tokens, 3d10 Clanrats and 5d10 Slaves

Career Entries: Clawleader, Gutter Runner, Master Mutator, Master Moulder, Plague Priest, Warlock Engineer

Career Exits: Master Assassin, Master Mutator, Slave, Warlock Master

Clawleader

Description: Clawleaders are Skaven in positions of some responsibility, gained either as a promotion or by murdering their previous Clawleaders. While they have unquestioned control over the Clanrats in their charge, they are little better than self-inflated Clanrats to Chieftains and Warlords. As such, Clawleaders are as expendable as any other Skaven.

The Clawleader career encompasses a category of leaders that is found in nearly all Clans and castes, each with different names but the same career characteristics. Clawleaders typically lead groups of Clanrats, Fangleaders lead Stormvermin, Nightleaders lead Night Runners, and Pawleaders lead slaves.

— Clawleader Advance Scheme —

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+15%	+10%	+5%	+5%	+10%	+5%	+10%	+5%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics), Command, Common Knowledge (any two), Concealment, Dodge Blow, Intimidate, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Scale Sheer Surface, Silent Move, Speak Language (any one), Swim

Talents: Keen Senses, Menacing, Schemer, Seasoned Traveller, Street Fighting *or* Wrestling, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure

Trappings: Light Armour (Full Leather Armour), Hand Weapon, Shield, 4 Warpstone Tokens, 1d10 Clanrats, Night Runners, Slaves, or Stormvermin

Career Entries: Clanrat, Night Runner, Packmaster, Slave, Stormvermin

Career Exits: Clan Chieftain, Gutter Runner, Interrogator, Master Moulder, Slave, Veteran

Grey Seer

Description: The Grey Seers hold a special place in Skaven society. Using the power granted by their profane god, they, and they alone, can interpret the Horned Rat's will and desires. As such, they are prophets and intermediaries. Grey Seers typically counsel Warlord Clans, subtly guiding them to achieve whatever sinister plot they've concocted, whether it was inspired by the Horned Rat or from their own dark imaginings. Grey Seers have unmatched power, for any who oppose them are denounced as heretics and traitors, earning a swift and terrible death. Their influence and position gives these leaders a little more security and freedom than that available to other Skaven, but treachery is ingrained in this culture. With power comes resentment, rewarding no few Grey Seers with a knife in the back.

— Grey Seer Advance Scheme —

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10%	+10%	+5%	+10%	+20%	+20%	+25%	+15%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+5	—	—	—	+2	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Magic), Academic Knowledge (Theology), Academic Knowledge (any one), Channelling, Command, Common Knowledge (any two), Intimidate, Magical Sense, Read/Write, Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic *or* Magick), Speak Language (any two)

Talents: Dark Lore (Warp)*, Dark Magic *or* Strong-minded, Fast Hands *or* Very Resilient, Lesser Magic (any two), Master Orator, Meditation *or* Mighty Missile

Trappings: Grey Robes, Quarter Staff, 8 Warpstone Tokens, 1 Skaven Magic Item

Career Entries: Apprentice Grey Seer

Career Exits: Scholar, Seer Lord

Gutter Runner

Description: Clan Eshin Night Runners who manage to survive have two options open to them if they wish to advance in their Clan. First, they could accept the post of responsibility, becoming Nightleaders (see Clawleader, above) and leading missions against the Clan's enemies. Or second, they could be selected to learn the darker mysteries of the Art of the Silent Death. Those who choose the latter undergo intense training, honing their skills of combat, stealth, and murder. Gutter Runners operate outside normal Skaven groups and often alone, being better suited to infiltrate their enemy's encampments and wreak havoc behind enemy lines.

Only members of Clan Eshin can become Gutter Runners.

— Gutter Runner Advance Scheme —

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+15%	+15%	+5%	+10%	+20%	+5%	+10%	+5%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Common Knowledge (Skaven), Concealment, Disguise, Dodge Blow, Evaluate, Lip Reading, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Pick Locks, Scale Sheet Surface, Search, Silent Move, Sleight of Hand, Swim

Talents: Fleet-Footed, Natural Weapons, Orientation, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Crossbow), Specialist Weapon Group (Throwing), Trapfinder

Trappings: Light Armour (Leather Jack, Leather Skullcap), Hand Weapon, Punching Dagger, Crossbow Pistol with 10 bolts, 4 Throwing Stars, Best Craftsmanship Rope (10 Yards)

Career Entries: Night Runner

Career Exits: Bodyguard, Bounty Hunter, Clawleader, Hunter, Master Assassin, Mercenary, Slave, Scout, Sorcerer, Spy, Veteran

Warlords and the Council of Thirteen

While it's conceivable that a campaign featuring Skaven as Player Characters could last so long that they eventually rise to claim a seat on the Council of Thirteen, it's unlikely. Warlords and the members of the Council represent the heights of Skaven power and should remain sinister and mysterious, far beyond the reaches of ordinary PCs. Hence, just as you won't find an Emperor career in *WFRP*, nor will you find a Warlord career in *Children of the Horned Rat*.

Master Assassin

Description: Only those Gutter Runners who excel in their trade can ever hope to be indoctrinated into the highest secrets of the Cathay fighting arts. While still burdened by the typical Skaven outlook, Master Assassins are more patient, centred, and ruthless than their brethren. They can kill with a touch, are masters of countless weapons, and can slip in and out of some of the most heavily guarded strongholds unseen.

Only members of Clan Eshin may become Master Assassins.

— Master Assassin Advance Scheme —							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+25%	+25%	+10%	+15%	+30%	+15%	+20%	+10%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+2	+6	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Common Knowledge (Cathay), Concealment, Disguise, Dodge Blow, Evaluate, Lip Reading, Perception, Pick Lock, Prepare Poison, Read/Write, Scale Sheer Surface, Search, Set Trap, Shadowing, Silent Move, Sleight of Hand, Swim

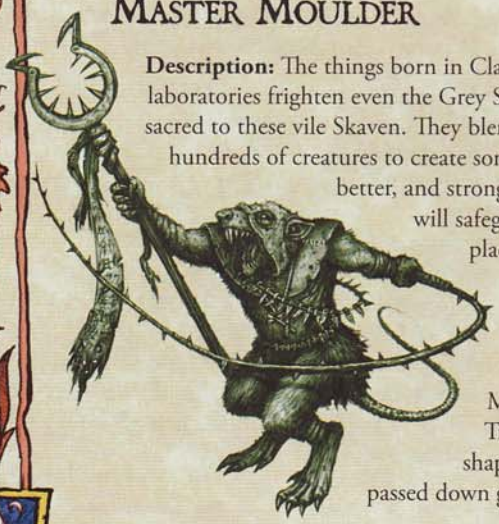
Talents: Alley Cat, Art of Silent Death*, Lightning Parry, Quick Draw, Specialist Weapon Group (Entangling), Specialist Weapon Group (Throwing), Specialist Weapon Group (any one), Tail Fighting*, Wall Runner*

Trappings: Light Armour (Leather Jack and Leather Skullcap), Hand Weapon, 2 Punching Daggers, 2 Rat Claws, 4 Throwing Stars, Net, Blowgun with 10 Darts, 3 Doses of any Poison

Career Entries: Gutter Runner

Career Exits: Clan Chieftain, Master Thief, Slave, Spy

Master Moulder



Description: The things born in Clan Moulder's laboratories frighten even the Grey Seers. Nothing is sacred to these vile Skaven. They blend the parts of hundreds of creatures to create something bigger, better, and stronger, a horror that will safeguard Moulder's place at the top of the pile. The creators of these abominations are the Master Moulders. Trained in flesh-shaping techniques passed down generation after generation, they are responsible for Giant Rats, Rat Ogres, and any number of other abominations.

Only members of Clan Moulder may become Master Moulders.

— Master Moulder Advance Scheme —							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+15%	—	+10%	+15%	+10%	+15%	+15%	+10%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+5	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Science), Academic Knowledge (any one), Animal Care, Animal Training, Command, Common Knowledge (any two), Evaluate, Heal, Intimidate, Perception, Search, Torture, Trade (any one)

Talents: Dealmaker, Master of the Lash*, Mould Flesh*, Schemer, Surgery, Unsettling

Trappings: Light Armour (Full Leather Armour), Cloak, Hand Weapon, Whip, 3 sets of Manacles, 10 Warpstone Tokens, 1d10 Giant Rats *or* a Rat Ogre

Career Entries: Clawleader, Packmaster

Career Exits: Clan Chieftain, Master Mutator, Physician, Slave, Veteran

Master Mutator

Description: Commanding the Skaven's hellish legions of twisted flesh are the Master Mutators. These Mad Skaven hold the foulest secrets of their craft, trickling the information to the Master Moulders, empowering them with just enough knowledge to protect their Clan while keeping the rest secret to prevent being overthrown. It's not known what abominations can be attributed to the Master Mutators, but some believe that not all of the terrors found in the Old World are by the will of the Changer of Ways. The Packmasters claim in hushed tones and with shudders that the Master Mutators' best subjects are themselves.

Only members of Clan Moulder may become Master Mutators.

— Master Mutator Advance Scheme —							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+30%	+10	+20%	+30%	+20%	+30%	+25%	+15%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+2	+7	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (any three), Animal Care, Animal Training, Charm Animal, Command, Common Knowledge (any three), Concealment, Dodge Blow, Evaluate, Follow Trail, Haggle, Intimidate, Navigation, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Prepare Poison, Search, Set Trap, Shadowing, Silent Move, Swim, Torture, Trade (any two)

Talents: Acute Hearing *or* Excellent Vision, Coolheaded, Dealmaker, Fearless, Keen Senses, Master of the Lash*, Schemer, Surgery, Unsettling

Trappings: Medium Armour (Full Mail Armour), Best Craftsmanship Hand Weapon, Best Craftsmanship Whip, 3 sets of Manacles, 20 Warpstone Tokens, 1d10/2 Packmasters, 1 Master Moulder, 2d10 Giant Rats, Rat Ogre

Career Entries: Clan Chieftain, Master Moulder

Career Exits: Clan Chieftain

Plague Deacon

Description: Though the Grey Seers are regarded as the ultimate authority on the doctrines of the Horned Rat, Clan Pestilens embraces the Lord of Decay aspect of the Skaven god. Exploring all things involving the slow destruction and rotting of the world, a few of their number dabble in the magic granted by their master. While in theory such power is divinely granted, the fact is that it employs the same Dark Magic used by the Grey Seers, but is instead focused on matters of disease. Plague Deacons are the initiates of these arts, taking the first steps towards a darker understanding of their foul horned god.

Only members of Clan Pestilens may become Plague Deacons.

— Plague Deacon Advance Scheme —

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10%	+5%	+10%	+15%	+10%	+5%	+15%	+10%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+4	—	—	—	+1	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (any one), Academic Knowledge (Theology), Channelling, Common Knowledge (any two), Magical Sense, Perception, Read/Write, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Swim

Talents: Petty Magic (Warp)*, Public Speaking, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun

Trappings: Flail, 4 Warpstone Tokens

Career Entries: Plague Monk

Career Exits: Censer Bearer, Plague Priest, Slave

Plague Priest

Description: Warlords, Grey Seers, and even the mighty Stormvermin elicit fear and grudging respect in their foes, but none of them evoke the naked horror that the Plague Priests do. These grotesque Priests spread the word of pestilence through the vile concoctions they brew and with the Plague Rats they create. Each time a mortal succumbs to rotting death at the hands of one of their innovations, they glorify their master: the Lord of Decay. And as a reward for their constant devotion, the Horned Rat saddles their bodies with some of the worst plagues known in the Old World.

Only members of Clan Pestilens may become Plague Priests.

— Plague Priest Advance Scheme —

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+20%	+10%	+15%	+25%	+20%	+10%	+25%	+15%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+6	—	—	—	+1	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (any one), Academic Knowledge (Theology), Channelling, Common Knowledge (any two), Heal, Magical Sense, Perception, Speak Language (any two), Swim

Talents: Brew Contagion*, Dark Lore (Plague)*, Public Speaking

Trappings: Cauldron, 6 Warpstone Tokens, 1d10 Plague Rats, 1d10/2 Diseases, 1d10 Plague Monks

Career Entries: Plague Deacon

Career Exits: Clan Chieftain, Slave

Seer Lord

Description: Within the Under-Empire, the most powerful users of magic are the Seer Lords. Having survived the trials of competition with other Grey Seers, these Skaven embody the fickle magic of the Warp. Most Seer Lords advise Warlords and Chieftains, subtly directing their plans and actions to best accord with the wishes of their filthy god.

— Seer Lord Advance Scheme —							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+20%	+20%	+15%	+15%	+40%	+40%	+35%	+35%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+9	—	—	—	+3	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (any three), Channelling, Command, Common Knowledge (any three), Intimidate, Magical Sense, Read/Write, Speak Arcane Language (any three), Speak Language (any four)

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Dark Lore (Warp)*, Dark Magic *or* Strong-minded, Fast Hands *or* Very Resilient, Lesser Magic (any two), Master Orator, Meditation, Mighty Missile

Trappings: Grey Robes, Quarter Staff, 12 Warpstone Tokens, 2 Skaven Magic Items

Career Entries: Grey Seer

Career Exits: —

Sorcerer

Description: The Art of the Silent Death wasn't the only thing Clan Eshin brought back when they returned from Cathay. A few Skaven delved into the black arts of magic. Blending what they already knew of the warp with the techniques used by Cathay sorcerers, they developed a new lore, one that serves to enhance their Clan's power and mystique. Eshin Sorcerers are mysterious, rare, and keep to themselves; they are well aware that the Grey Seers brook no competition from other Skaven spellcasters.

Only members of Clan Eshin can become Sorcerers.

— Sorcerer Advance Scheme —							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+15%	+15%	—	+20%	+25%	+20%	+25%	+10%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+5	—	—	—	+2	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Magic), Academic Knowledge (any one), Channelling, Common Knowledge (any two), Intimidate, Magical Sense, Read/Write, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (any two)

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Armoured Casting, Dark Lore (Stealth)*, Dark Magic *or* Strong-minded, Fast Hands *or* Very Resilient, Lesser Magic (any two), Meditation *or* Mighty Missile, Specialist Weapon Group (Throwing)

Trappings: Hand Weapon, 3 Throwing Stars, 3 Smoke Bombs, Cloak, Sack, 4 Warpstone Tokens

Career Entries: Gutter Runner, Night Runner

Career Exits: Gutter Runner, Master Wizard*, Slave

*Sorcerers who advance into the Master Wizard career are *not* members of the Colleges of Magic in Altdorf. Rather, use the Master Wizard Advance Scheme to reflect a greater degree of study and learning in the Lore of Stealth.

Stormvermin

Description: Those Black Skaven who prove their skill at arms and loyalty to all Skaven are eventually selected to join the illustrious ranks of the Stormvermin. Recognized as some of the most devastating warriors in Skaven society, units of Stormvermin protect Clawleaders, Chieftains and even Grey Seers.

— Stormvermin Advance Scheme —							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+15%	+5%	+10%	+10%	+15%	—	+10%	+5%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Command *or* Evaluate, Dodge Blow, Intimidate, Perception, Search

Talents: Menacing, Specialist Weapon Group (Flail), Strike to Injure, Stout-hearted, Sturdy, Tunnel Rat, Very Strong *or* Very Resilient, Warrior Born

Trappings: Medium Armour (Mail Shirt, Leather Jack, and Leather Skullcap), Flail or Great Weapon

Career Entries: Black Skaven

Career Exits: Bodyguard, Clawleader, Mercenary, Veteran, Zealot

Warlock Engineer

Description: Skaven are known for many things—disease, mutated monsters, hordes of vermin—but it is their sick blend of honest engineering and Warpstone for which they are most famous. Too many soldiers have lost their lives to a sniper's warplock jezzail; too many villages have been cleansed by clouds of foul poisonous mist; and too many entire towns have been turned to ash by the

dreaded warpfire cannons. Indeed it is these weapons that give the Skaven one of their greatest edges, and the creation of these tools is owed to the Warlock Engineers—mechanically minded Skaven who toil in the Clan Skryre workshops to devise new and terrible weapons to destroy the weak races on the surface and bring glory to the Ratmen.

Only members of Clan Skryre may become Warlock Engineers.

— Warlock Engineer Advance Scheme —

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+15%	+20%	+10%	+10%	+30%	+30%	+15%	+5%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+7	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Engineering), Academic Knowledge (Science), Common Knowledge (any one), Drive *or* Ride, Perception, Read/Write, Speak Language (any two), Trade (Gunsmith), Trade (Smith)

Talents: Marksman, Master Gunner, Sharpshooter, Specialist Weapon Group (Engineer *or* Gunpowder), Sure Shot, Warlock Engineering*

Trappings: Light Armour (Leather Jack), Engineer's Kit, Warplock Jezzail with Ammunition for 10 Shots *or* 4 Poison Wind Globes, Warp Blade, Supercharged Warp-Power Accumulator, 3 pounds of Warpstone

Career Entries: Clawleader, Engineer, Pistolier

Career Exits: Clan Chieftain, Interrogator, Mercenary, Slave, Veteran

New Talents

Children of the Horned Rat introduces the following new talents to *WFRP*.

Art of Silent Death

Description: You have mastered the deadly art of open-hand fighting, as taught by the martial artists of Cathay. When making a successful unarmed attack, you deal Damage equal to SB–3 and Armour Points do not count as double.

Black Hunger

Description: You suffer from a gnawing and constant urge to kill. When provoked, you slip into a terrible frothing rage. You can use this Talent as a Free Action, but only on your turn. For the duration of the round, your Attack characteristic increases by +1 and your Movement characteristic increases by +2. At the end of the round, you take 1d10/5 Damage 3 hits that ignore armour but not Toughness Bonus.

Brew Contagion

Description: You can use the recipes passed on by other Plague Priests to concoct vile plagues, allowing you to use Trade (Brewing) to create a contagious brew. Each batch of malfeasance requires 1d10/2 successful Trade (Brewing) Tests and one Warpstone Token per Test along with a variety of other unsavoury substances as appropriate to the disease. A batch is potent (it can infect those exposed to it) for 1d10 days before drying up and becoming inert.

Dark Lore

Description: In addition to the Dark Lores of Chaos and Necromancy, you may also select one of the following: Plague, Stealth, and Warp. Only Skaven may select these Lores.

Master of the Lash

Description: You are an expert at controlling the creations of Clan Moulder. When leading a pack of creatures, Rat Ogres, Giant Rats, Rat Swarms and so on, you gain a +20% bonus to Animal Training and Command Tests.

Mould Flesh

Description: If you have an ample supply of Warpstone, you may make Surgery Tests to create horrible abominations like Giant Rats and Rat Ogres. See Fleshmoulding on page 104 for more details.

Petty Magic (Warp)

Description: You know the most basic of magical techniques. Like Dark Lore, Petty Magic is not one talent, but many. Skaven, in particular, master the fundamentals of the Lore of Warp, which are covered by the Petty Magic (Warp) spells. See **Chapter V: Warfare** for more details on these spells.

Skaven Construct

Description: You are an automaton powered by Warpstone. You are immune to Fear, Terror, stunning, poison, diseases, and all spells, skills, and effects that involve the manipulation of emotions and the mind. You have no Intelligence, Will Power, or Fellowship Characteristics, and you cannot make Tests involving them. In addition, you cannot use skills that rely on these Characteristics. Skaven with Warlock Engineer can send you psychic instructions as a free action. You must follow these instructions exactly as described. In the case of unclear instructions, conflicting instructions, or no instruction, you take no action. If two Skaven attempt to control you, they must make opposed Will Power Tests, with you following the victor's commands.

Tail Fighting

Description: You may wield an Ordinary weapon with your tail.

Unreliable Construct

Description: To take this Talent, you must first have the Skaven Construct Talent. You are unreliable. Whenever a Skaven issues you a command, roll 1d10. On a result of 1 or 2, you malfunction. Roll on the following:

D10	Result
1	You pop a valve and take a Damage 5 hit (regardless of armour or Toughness Bonus)
2–6	You attack the closest creature (enemy or ally)
7–9	You do nothing this round; all attacks against you gain a +30% bonus
10	You respond to commands, but take a –20% penalty to all Characteristics for the round

Wall Runner

Description: You gain a +20% bonus to Scale Sheer Surface Tests. In addition, you climb a number of yards equal to your Movement Characteristic with a successful test.

Warlock Engineering

Description: With this talent, you can make Trade (Engineering) Tests to produce a variety of Clan Skryre technological devices. See **Chapter V: Warfare** for details.

— Fleshmoulding —

The Master Moulders of Clan Moulder create a menagerie of deadly creatures by means of the Fleshmoulding techniques. Ever evolving, this process involves a combination of surgery and exposure to warp energy to create something new and terrifying. Among Clan Moulder's most successful creations are the Giant Rat and the Rat Ogre. What follows are basic rules for using Fleshmoulding to change existing creatures and to create new ones.

> *"Fear, stupid man-thing. We make better. Improve-improve. Pain-pain. But, better-better."*
>
> —Tichit, Master Moulder

Requirements

To Fleshmould, a Skaven must have the Surgery Skill and the Mould Flesh Talent. In addition, he must have an ample supply of Warpstone and one or more test subjects.

Improvement

When you improve an existing creature, you expose it to raw warp energy to see what form it will take. Some Master Moulders burn Warpstone near the creature, pack it around the body in specific locations, or even introduce the substance directly into the subject's system, all the while treating the subject with special unguents and injecting fluids to control the mutating effects of the Warpstone.

The subject must remain exposed to the Warpstone for 1 hour per 5% of his Toughness Characteristic, making a Toughness Test at the end of this period. To force the subject to make

Table 7–7: Improvements

Roll	Result
01—10	*Bigger, Stronger, Better:* Subject increases Strength, Toughness and Intelligence Characteristics by +2d10%. Subject doubles his Wounds Characteristic. Subject gains Fearless, Frightening, Natural Weapons, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure.
11—30	*Some Improvement:* Subject increases Strength, Toughness and Intelligence Characteristics by +1d10%. Subject increases his Wounds Characteristic by one-half. Subject gains Menacing, Natural Weapons, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure.
31—50	*Flawed:* Subject increases a Strength and Toughness by +3d10%, reduce Ballistic Skill to 0%. The subject gains In Need of Direction (see **Chapter VII: A Skaven Campaign**). Double the subject's Wounds Characteristic. Subject loses all Talents except for those with which he started, gaining Fearless, Frightening, Natural Weapons, Strike Mighty Blow, and Strike to Injure in their place.
51—60	*Unexpected Results:* Improve a random Characteristic by +2d10% and reduce another Characteristic by –2d10%. Roll 1d10. On a 1, WS; 2, BS; 3–4, S; 5–6, T; 7, Ag; 8, Int; 9, WP; 10, Fel.
61—70	*Madness:* The subject goes insane, gaining 1d10 Insanity Points.
71—80	*Mutations:* The subject gains 1d10/5 mutations.
81—90	*Failure:* The subject dies slowly as it is cooked alive by the terrible warp energies.
91—00	GM's Choice: The GM should come up with something suitably strange and unexpected.

an Average (+0%) Toughness Test, you must use 1 Warpstone Token per 5% of the subject's Toughness Characteristic. If the subject succeeds, he resists the effects of the Warpstone, and all of the materials are consumed. If he fails, he is "improved," and rolls on **Table 7–7: Improvements**. If he fails by one degree (10%), he rolls on **Table 7–7: Improvements** and gains 1d10/5 mutations. If he fails by two degrees (20%), he gains no improvements and instead gains 1d10/2 mutations. If he fails by three degrees (30%) or more he dies. Even if the improvement fails, you can try again, though you need a fresh supply of Warpstone.

If you wish to make the Test easier to resist, such as for a weaker subject, you may use less Warpstone. To make the Test more difficult to resist, you may use more Warpstone. See **Table 7–6: Warpstone and Improvement** for the amount of Warpstone needed per % of the subject's Toughness Characteristic to create the desired difficulty.

Skilled surgeons may accomplish their goals with lower expenditures of Warpstone; after deciding what difficulty you want the subject's Toughness Test to be and determining the amount of Warpstone normally needed, make a Surgery Test. For each degree of success, you use 1 fewer Warpstone Token than normal.

Table 7–6: Warpstone and Improvement

Amount of Warpstone	Difficulty
1 per 20% or less	Very Easy (+30%)
1 per 15%	Easy (+20%)
1 per 10%	Routine (+10%)
1 per 5%	Average (+0%)
3 per 10%	Challenging (–10%)
2 per 5%	Hard (–20%)
5 per 10%	Very Hard (–30%)

Example

Chris plays a Master Moulder named Horruin and has captured a fresh Human youth, perfect for experimentation. The GM tells Chris that the subject has a 25% Toughness, a bit weak, but very susceptible to moulding. So, with the boy strapped to the table, Chris makes a Surgery Test, succeeding by 1 degree of success and therefore reducing the amount of Warpstone Tokens he needs by 1. Since the lad has a 25% Toughness, Chris needs 4 (25/5 is 5, but he reduces it by 1 for his Surgery Test) Warpstone Tokens to affect the patient, which he luckily has. After 5 hours of exposure to the Warpstone, the subject makes a Toughness Test, rolling a 45%. To Horruin's annoyance, the lad failed by two degrees, resulting in mutations only. In frustration, he eats the screaming boy alive.

A Skaven Campaign

"You four. Yes-yes, you. Go to city quick-quick, kill man-thing at warp-tower. Bring back..."

—A typical Skaven assignment

The information presented in this book has two primary uses. The first is to aid in running a game where the Skaven represent one of the play group's primary antagonists. The Skaven, with their multitudes and their bent towards Chaos, make excellent villains in any game. The second option is to delve deeper into the darkness of the Old World, and run a game where the players portray the Skaven themselves.

— Skaven as Villains —

The Skaven are creatures of unredeemable evil, steeped in Chaos, and seeking to dominate the world. As opponents, they offer excellent variety, as adventures involving them can range from murder mysteries to dungeon delves to outright warfare.

In terms of motivating characters to fight the foul ratmen, any adventurer worth his salt should willingly oppose the hordes, for to do otherwise is to grant them title over the Old World. Treasures and glory acquired in the course of rooting out the foul ratmen are simply a bonus.

The Skaven Conspiracy

One thing keeping mankind from roundly defeating the Skaven is its continued refusal to believe in them. Despite all the evidence presented in support of the existence of nefarious, rat-like creatures, humanity insists on proclaiming such stories as myths and bedtime stories. This is partly due to the incredulity of mankind in general, especially in relation to stories that seem to be too wild or outlandish to be believed. When Skaven are encountered, they are written off as being a particularly rat-like type of Beastman, and not a species unto themselves.

There is rumour of an organized conspiracy in the upper echelons of the Empire meant to mask the presence of the Skaven from the masses. The reasons for this are many and varied, but the most probable of them is that the Skaven wish to remain below the notice of their enemies so they can maintain the element of surprise when they finally decide to strike. The ramifications of this line of reason are staggering, especially if the Skaven have managed to subvert the very leadership professing to protect humankind from the forces of Chaos.

Those folk who report encounters with Skaven are subsequently viewed with suspicion by the authorities, and many are discounted as madmen. Many adventurers find it impossible to get any assistance from the authorities in cases involving the Skaven. If they continue to insist on the existence of the Skaven, they may very well find themselves ostracized by their peers, or locked away entirely.

This conspiracy, perhaps, presents the single greatest challenge for adventurers who take the fight to the Skaven. Since the civil authorities view Skaven as inventions of madmen, they are unlikely to hire adventurers to chase them down. Like as not, anyone with a stake in seeing the Skaven defeated will have to do so without official support or offer of reward.

— Skaven as PCs —

There are few more intimidating options than allowing your players to run free as Skaven. But what does such a course of action involve? What are the potential stumbling blocks, as well as the obvious rewards, of a player group that consists entirely of Skaven characters?

The loathsome Ratmen are not Humans in rodent costumes, nor should they be portrayed as such. They are a distinct species, with motivations born of centuries of violence, brutality, scheming, and intrigue. Though there are similarities, Skaven behaviour and Human behaviour are vastly different. There are, of course, exceptions, wherein humans might sometimes behave like Skaven, and where Skaven may occasionally show emotions and motivations that are similar to those exhibited by Humans.

Skaven Player Groups

The most obvious problem with a group of Skaven is that the Ratmen value survival above all other considerations. The cost is never too high to pay. "Better them than I," he might think, as he turns his hairless tail to the enemy and flees into the gloom of the Under-Empire, the pained squeaks and horrified chittering of his former allies ringing ever more dimly in his ears. This means that a GM's carefully planned and challenging encounter might never be used, because the players run as soon as things seem mildly frightening.

Besides being cowardly and disloyal, Skaven are also prone to in-fighting. Such conflict provides the Skaven with a way to establish a natural pecking order within their group. Stronger Skaven are respected, feared, and envied, while weaker ones are bullied and abused by their superiors. Not all players will find this manner of interaction to be entertaining, and it can easily detract from the focus of a campaign. Though it may be a welcome change from the usual scenario, it can get tedious unless your players come to some kind of arrangement.

Obviously, then, it can be difficult to form a cohesive group of Skaven player characters. Some manner of loyalty, even if it is based solely on convenience, needs to be instilled in the group as a whole. Prior to playing, it might be necessary to discuss the ramifications of the game with the players, and ask them to work out their motivations and desires as a group. In this manner, there will be fewer surprises that might disrupt things later on.

Other ideas for creating a cohesive Skaven party are discussed below. Two or more of these suggestions can be incorporated at the same time, giving the players multiple reasons to work together.

Birthkin

Though Skaven are born in large litters, they receive little succour from their birth mothers or from their birthkin. Torn from the teat of the bloated breeder, castrated males take them to special nurseries, where they receive food, water, and scraps of clothing, though never enough for everyone. The masters expect the young to fight over the resources to weed out the runts and the weak so that only the strong survive. During this time, a strong pecking order emerges, with one or two Skaven becoming the dominant in the group—but if given an opportunity, their birthkin are quick to replace these alpha Ratmen.

This same sensibility stays with Skaven their entire lives. When assembled into a group, you should expect some posturing, aggression, and maybe even a few deaths as the more powerful character emerges to the fore. Encourage this behaviour, but remind the players that the Skaven, while individually believing they are the greatest in the world, recognise the need for others, if only to cast blame in the case of a failure. Fatalities are often lessened by the presence of a Grey Seer or Black Skaven.

Clan Affiliation

To strengthen the bond in a group, have them all be from the same Clan, or at least members of allied Clans. This allows the Skaven to relax their guard—a little—and focus on the mission at hand. Still, the same seeds of treachery present everywhere in the Under-Empire are just as present within the Clan as they are without. And Skaven characters ought to jockey for positions of strength and authority to ensure their place in their unit.

The Strong Leader

One sure-fire way to keep a group of Skaven PCs in line is to give them a single strong leader to either respect or despise. Their leader may charge them to remain loyal to one another,

just as he expects them to be loyal to him, and he may threaten death or other violence in the event that the bonds within the group break down. While fear of their superiors often keeps the Skaven from challenging their authority, it can also foster feelings of disdain. Like-minded Ratmen who have been abused and bullied by their leaders can sometimes pool their resources in order to take command of their own destinies. While these tendencies should be encouraged, especially due to the potential for roleplaying that they provide, they should also be seen as long-term goals. After all, once the strong leader has been dispatched, the Skaven players will have no one left to fight but each other.

Everyone is Essential

In this scenario, each character has some skill or specialty essential to the group's survival. To lose one or more of these assets means the party is less likely to survive, which also means that Skaven who do not work well together are risking their own lives. The value of each party member needs to be stressed, and this is best accomplished by giving the group obstacles that put their individual talents to good use. Remind them constantly that each character is essential to their overall survival.

Politics

If the PCs are all of different Clans, it can be detrimental to inter-clan relationships if they kill or maim one another. The interactions between the Clans are often less than ideal (to say the least), and even minor offences can spark open conflict between them. In order to amend these transgressions, it is easier to sacrifice a single individual…like the one who betrayed or murdered the other Skaven…than risk warfare. What this means to a group of Skaven is that they risk the ire of their masters by fighting amongst themselves, especially if such quarrels lead to one or more deaths. So long as they are firmly instructed to keep the peace, they are more likely to keep from killing one another.

Skaven Adventures

The Skaven see the world around them in shades of black and white. They consider themselves to be the master race, destined by their dark god to inherit the world above them. In the meantime, they are constantly beset by the intrigues and schemes of other Skaven, and must manage to survive their own kin so they can ensure the success of the Great Ascendancy.

The Quest for Status

Status is everything to the Skaven. Each Skaven has elaborate dreams of his own greatness, where he will be lauded by his peers, respected by his enemies, and accorded the power and reputation due by all. Much of the time, these dreams are wild and unrealized. In a world filled with millions of other Ratmen, the odds of any single Skaven rising to such heights are low, indeed.

Skaven who take a chance and adventure of their own accord strive to increase their prestige as a result. Any Skaven, given half a chance to increase his lot in life (whether through honest or underhanded means), will take it. Prestige, after all, is more valuable to a Skaven than gold, treasure, or jewels (though not Warpstone of course). The value of physical rewards lies not in their material worth, but in the temporal power they can bring to their wielder.

In this way, Skaven adventurers are different from their hairless peers. Whilst Humans, Dwarfs, and Elves risk their lives for wealth and fortune, Skaven are uninterested in such things. Rewards of rank and privilege are more likely to turn a Skaven's head than a gold crown or a bejewelled sceptre—that is, unless the items in question will increase the Ratman's odds of securing victory and promotion.

The Quest for Warpstone

If the Skaven have any currency at all, it is Warpstone. Warpstone is everything to the Skaven race. It is incorporated into their magic, their technology, and their lives as no other element is. The Skaven have fought many wars for Warpstone. From battles in the crumbling alleys of Mordheim to the corpse-choked fields of Silvania, Skaven risk everything for the green-tinged stone.

Unlike other forms of material wealth (gold, silver, jewels and so on), Warpstone is predominant to the Skaven. They will do almost anything to acquire even small amounts of it. The flow of the stuff is one of the primary motivating factors of their entire society. Leaders may send groups on suicidal missions to acquire it, even if its existence in a particular location has not been definitively proven.

The Skaven Against Chaos

While the Skaven are an embodiment of Chaos, they see themselves principally as tools of the Horned Rat. The forces of Chaos and the dark powers working to enslave the world are yet another obstacle to the Great Ascendancy, and they too must be overcome in time. Given the fact that Chaos seeks to expand its dominance over the surface world, it is ever more likely that it will clash with the armies of the Under-Empire. Skaven parties might be sent on missions to investigate or spy upon Chaos movements, or might be tasked with battling them directly. Alternatively, they might also cultivate convenient alliances with Chaos's servants, especially if they can weaken them sufficiently so that their own success in the end is unquestioned.

Skaven Against Skaven

Ultimately, the Skaven fight one another for dominance, and the weak continue to make way for the strong. When all but the strong remain, they will swarm onto the face of the earth and conquer the peoples who have opposed them for millennia. Until that day, however, Skaven must battle each other. A great many adventures can be wrought from the day-to-day conflicts and internecine warfare all too common in the Under-Empire.

One way of expanding a Clan's dominance is to destroy the weaker Clans, taking possession of their holdings and enslaving their people. By doing so, Skaven increase their own Clan's temporal power by expanding its armies and claiming new warrens, mines, and equipment. Small groups of Skaven can be sent in to scout these areas out ahead of a main assault force, probing strongholds for weaknesses and entry points. Occasionally, overwhelming military force is not an option. It can sometimes benefit the Skaven to strike in a more precise fashion by assassinating a Clan's leadership.

Skaven Against the World

Ultimately, the Skaven intend to control the surface world. Anyone not killed in the initial onslaught is enslaved. Many adventures for Skaven parties can be had in preparation for the Great Ascendancy of their race. Infiltrating Human settlements, corrupting their leaders, and sowing discord amongst their ranks are all honourable endeavours for a group of Skaven adventurers.

— Against the Skaven —

The adventure ideas presented here are written with traditional adventurers in mind. The Skaven are most definitely in the antagonist role, by default. That said, each idea can be easily incorporated into a campaign where the Player Characters are Skaven. All you need to do in most cases is to turn the tables, so to speak, and pit the Players (as Skaven) against the surface races who are attempting to stop them.

Abduction/Rescue

Someone goes missing, and the Player Characters are asked to investigate the disappearance. The missing party might be a friend or relative, making his disappearance a personal matter, or he may be a complete stranger, in which case there may be a reward for anyone who recovers him. Of course, the Skaven are responsible for kidnapping the unfortunate victim, and there are many reasons that might explain why. Perhaps he had been dealing with the Ratmen, and ended up with more than he'd bargained for. He might also have been an unfortunate casualty of a slave raid, and will be found in chains with a bevy of other pitiful victims.

From a Skaven standpoint, this adventure idea can be reversed, with the Skaven PCs representing the kidnapping party. They must engineer the kidnapping itself, and then deal with the inevitable consequences of their actions. The adventure might stand up on its own, however, if the Skaven are sent to fetch one of their numbers who was captured by a group of Human monster hunters who wish to prove the Ratmen's existence to a sceptical Empire. Such a thing cannot be allowed to happen, and the captured Ratman must either be rescued or killed (and its body destroyed).

Assassins

Someone becomes the target of a skilled Skaven Assassin. In the worst case scenario, the killer is one of Eshin's fearsome assassins, and he stops at nothing to see that his victim is killed. The Player Characters must defend the potential victim from this menace, while at the same time discovering why a contract was put out on him. Does the victim know too much? Was the Assassin hired by a Human antagonist, or was he sent by the Council of Thirteen to silence his target?

Skaven parties would be charged with assassinating the target, though they might also be assigned to protect an ally from the poisoned knives of Clan Eshin.

Beast on the Loose

Either because it escaped, or because it was loosed on purpose, one of Clan Moulder's experiments is running amok in a rural community. The Player Characters are attacked by the monster, or encounter the horrifying results of the beast's depredations. The local villagers ask the characters to hunt the creature down. There might be as few as one of the creatures on the loose or as many as an entire pack of them that work in tandem or as individuals. This adventure also works well in a city-based campaign, especially if the creatures are terrorizing a poor part of town.

If used for a group of Skaven characters, this adventure can be played pretty much as read. They might be hired by Clan Moulder to monitor the activities of the beast so as to prevent its capture or death. Conversely, perhaps the creature needs to be re-captured, and the Player Characters are the ones assigned to perform such a deed.

Blackmail, Skaven Style

The Skaven blackmailed someone of importance, and are using them to further their nefarious schemes. The PCs must either expose the villain for what he is, or they must help the pawn to clear his name. The loathsome Ratmen might also extort help from their pawn, or he might just be a bad guy who thinks he's using the Skaven when they are, in fact, actually using him. Whatever the case, the Skaven rarely bother blackmailing Humans who have little or no power, so PCs doubtless have trouble with his lackeys, minions, and even his Human enemies.

In a Skaven-based campaign, the PCs might be the ones sent to blackmail a Human noble or politico. In the process, they could run afoul of his bodyguards, his greed, and any adventurers who seek to right the wrongs that the Skaven are perpetrating.

The Doomsday Device

The Skaven of Clan Skryre have invented an object of horrible purpose that can easily cleanse a tract of land of all organic life. The PCs must uncover this device and capture or destroy it before the Warlock Engineers make good on their threat to use the infernal machine. If they intend to destroy it, they must do so at their own risk, for damaging it could have the effect of setting it off. Likewise, they may intend to capture the thing, yet several moral questions may arise if this is their ultimate goal. Can the Empire be trusted to be steward to such terrible technology? Can anyone?

Skaven characters, on the other hand, must either protect the device, or retrieve it after it has been captured, or worst of all, test it out themselves.

The Great Ascendancy

The Skaven are constantly scheming and preparing for the Great Ascendancy. This invasion theme could apply to a single adventure, or be the central focus of an entire campaign. The PCs may stem the tide of the invasion or discover the invasion plans just prior to their launch. The authorities must be warned, which is easier said than done. Once the invasion begins, however, there will no longer be cause for denial, though by then it may already be too late.

If they are Skaven, the PCs may need to make their own invasion plans, or, at the least, participate in the invasion as members of a scouting detachment or other independent military unit.

Murder Mystery

A friend or associate is found murdered, and it is up to the PCs to uncover the culprit. This type of adventure should require investigation and interviews before the pieces begin to fall into place. If the characters get too close to discovering who is responsible for the murder, they may find themselves facing Skaven or their Human thralls, who will silence them by any means necessary.

As Skaven, the PCs may be the perpetrators of a murder. They must plan and perform the murder without attracting too much attention, and then they must successfully cover their tracks once the deed has been done. Conversely, the Skaven investigate the murder of one of their superiors in the Under-Empire.

Plague and Pestilence

A strange and virulent disease cropped up, and the players must discover its source, how it is transmitted, as well as how to cure it. In the course of their investigations, the PCs are at constant risk of contracting the disease. The disease is, of course, a product of Clan Pestilens or Clan Flem, released as an experiment upon a small community to see how quickly it will spread and kill the disgusting man-things.

Such diseases often pop up in the warrens of the Under-Empire. Skaven PCs may very well be sent to investigate such illnesses to see if they may be appropriate for use against the denizens of the surface world. Perhaps one or more of the characters are members of Clan Pestilens, and they wish to satisfy their own curiosity concerning the new ailment. Whatever the case may be, the Skaven, like their Human counterparts, risk contracting the disease and suffering the consequences.

Scavenger Hunt

A powerful artefact or treasure turns up, and it is up to the Player Characters to recover it either for the good of the Empire or for the good of their own wallets. In searching for their prize, the PCs run afoul of Skaven who are bent on doing the same thing. No matter which way this adventure runs, it is the interaction between the Skaven and their Human enemies that sets the stage. In a particularly interesting twist, the forces of Chaos might also appear on the scene and attempt to abscond with the items in question. The Humans and the Skaven may well find themselves working together to overcome the Chaos hordes, prior to fighting one another.

Under-Empire Reconnaissance

A group of adventurers venture into the Under-Empire to explore, reconnoitre, and map the environs. They might be hired by a government official who suspects that the tales of the Skaven are more than mere fancy, or they may perform such duties on their own in the hopes of stemming the tide of the verminous multitudes. Of course, they encounter Skaven in their explorations, as well as any number of subterranean dangers.

On the flip side of that Warpstone Token, a group of Skaven PCs may scout their enemy's positions, probing for weaknesses in a community's sewer system. Perhaps the Skaven have caught wind of a Human exploration party and must disrupt it before too much of their world is revealed to the enemies above them. Whatever the case, the Skaven are on their home turf, and anyone who enters their domain is going to be at a distinct disadvantage.

— Under-Empire Bestiary —

To an outsider, the ways of the Under-Empire are but endless stretches of caverns and tunnels periodically interrupted by a Skaven outpost. In some ways this is true, but these are not the empty halls many expect. No, the Under-Empire is home to a great many things, all competing with the same scarce resources as the Skaven. And though these beasts have learned to respect the might and command of their Skaven masters, none of these creatures hesitate to make a meal of the occasional Clanrat.

> *Loud, scrape, screams, hell . . . I . . . I . . .*
>
> —Nameless Explorer of the Under-Empire
>
> *Lad, thar ar-a manee terr'ble things downa thar. It be best to watcher step.*
>
> —Nuln Sewer Jack

Encounters in the Under-Empire

The Under-Empire is a fully realized world with as many opportunities for adventure, danger, and intrigue as any of the realms above. When travelling in the dark recesses, it is often possible to gloss over the time spent in transit. In the instance that things slow down, it can sometimes help to increase the excitement of a session's travel by generating a random encounter.

Random encounters in the Under-Empire can be generated by rolling on **Table 8–1: Random Encounters**. This table is specifically for encounters that are outside of populated areas. In essence, they represent encounters in the wilds of the Under-Empire. Feel free to add other appropriate monsters to this table from other resources including *Karak Azgal* and *Tome of Corruption*.

Bonechewers

Bonechewers are the reason that the Skaven have no need to worry about burying their dead. These five-foot-long mole-like rodents feed on bones, and they find plenty available around Skaven cities and settlements. They are entirely sightless, but their heightened sense of smell leads them unerringly to fresh corpses where they use their huge saw-like incisors to devour the entire skeleton. They have little taste for the living, but fight ferociously if their breeding areas are invaded or food supply threatened. Occasionally, a clutch of these beasts find

Table 8–1: Random Encounters

Roll	Encounter Type	Number Encountered	Roll	Encounter Type	Number Encountered
01—03	Adventurers (*WFRP*)	1d10	58–60	Orcs (*WFRP*)	1d10+5
04–07	Beastmen (*WFRP*)	1d10	61–62	Plague Rats (*CHR*)	1d10+5
08–11	Bonechewers (*CHR*)	1d10/2	63	Rat Ogre (*CHR*)	1
12–14	Cave Viper (*CHR*)	1	64–65	Rat Swarm (*CHR*)	1
15–16	Cavern Coral (*CHR*)	1	66	Rat-Wolf (*CHR*)	1d10+2/3
17–20	Chaos Cultists (*OWB*)	2d10	67–70	Skaven (*CHR*)	Roll once on **Table 5–1: Random Skaven Units**
21–22	Daemon Imps (*WFRP*)	1d10/2	71–73	Skeletons (*WFRP*)	1d10
23–25	Geckamand (*CHR*)	1d10/5	74–76	Squigs (*OWB*)	1d10
26–28	Ghost (*OWB*)	1	77–79	Tregara (*CHR*)	1d10/5
29–30	Giant Rats (*OWB*)	2d10	80–83	Troll (*OWB*)	1
31–33	Giant Spider (*OWB*)	1	84–87	Tunner Rushers (*CHR*)	1d10+2/3
34–36	Goblins (*WFRP*)	2d10	88–90	Warp Bats (*CHR*)	1d10/2
37–39	Goblins, Night (*OWB*)	2d10	91–93	Warpslime (*CHR*)	1
40	Hydra (*OWB*)	1	94–95	Wight (*WFRP*)	1
41–44	Lantern Worms (*CHR*)	1d10/2	96–97	Wraiths (*OWB*)	1d10/2
45–47	Lesser Daemon (*WFRP*)	1	98–99	Zombies (*WFRP*)	2d10
48–49	Minotaur (*OWB*)	1	00	GM's Choice	Varies
50–57	Mutants (*WFRP*)	2d10			

their way into a Human graveyard, and many an adventurer has earned some coin from the Priest of Morr by driving the beasts back to their usual diet.

—Bonechewer Statistics—							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
32%	0%	40%	32%	36%	18%	41%	10%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	10	4	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment +10%, Follow Trail, Perception +20%, Silent Move
Talents: Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Stout-Hearted
Special Rules:

- *Bonechewing Teeth:* Bonechewer teeth can cut through anything. Damage from bonechewer attacks ignores the first two points of armour.
- *Digger:* The bonechewer can tunnel through the earth at half its Movement.

Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Teeth
Slaughter Margin: Routine

Cave Viper

One of the few instances of native fauna in the Under-Empire, the cave viper is an eyeless pale white snake that consumes normal rats and lairs near geothermal vents for warmth. It is sensitive to vibrations and heat, allowing it to strike in complete darkness as if it were sighted, and is quite territorial, injecting its venom into any large creatures that come near it.

Cave vipers seldom grow longer than 4 feet in length, though there are reports of rare specimens reaching nearly 7 yards in length. These gigantic vipers cause a great amount of apprehension in Skaven, who exhibit an almost instinctual fear of the serpents.

—Cave Viper Statistics—							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
45%	0%	15%	21%	35%	6%	16%	0%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	6	1	2	3	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment +10%, Follow Trail +20%, Perception +20%
Talents: Natural Weapons
Special Rules:

- *Blind:* Cave Vipers lack eyes, so they ignore all sight-based effects.
- *Poisoned Bite:* Any creature that takes damage from a cave viper's bite is injected with a deadly poison. In addition to the damage from the bite, the victim must succeed at a Challenging (–10%) Toughness Test or die in 3 rounds plus 1 round per point of Toughness Bonus unless the character receives a Challenging (–10%) Heal Test within that time.
- *Taste Heat:* Cave Vipers can sense warmth within 10 yards (5 squares).

Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Teeth
Slaughter Margin: Average

Cavern Coral

Cavern Coral is a type of predatory acquatic fungus that grows, coral-like, in subterranean ponds and pools. As much like a sea anenome as true coral, the creature wraps its swaying tendrils around prey, pulling it beneath the water and keeping it there until it drowns. The tendrils then pull the corpse in to provide food to the main fungal mass. Though uncommon in deep subterranean pools, cavern coral thrives in shallow subterranean streams, ponds, and lakes. Its tube-like tendrils spread out from a central hub, and wave gently in the current.

—Cavern Coral Statistics—							
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
45%	0%	35%	55%	45%	—	—	—
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	15	3	5	0	0	0	0

Skills: None
Talents: Fearless, Natural Weapons
Special Rules:

- *Grasping Tendrils:* The Cavern Coral makes a Weapon Skill Test against any creature that comes into contact with its body. If it succeeds, it entraps the creature, pulling it beneath the surface of water in an attempt to drown it (see *WFRP*, page 136). Each round after the first, the entrapped creature can attempt to escape by making an opposed Strength Test (to break free) or by succeeding on a Challenging (–10%) Agility Test (to slip free). In both cases, the attempt to escape is a Full Action. Attacks made against ensnared creatures gain a +20% bonus.
- *Mindless:* Cavern Coral have no Intelligence, Will Power, or Fellowship and can never take or fail tests based on these characteristics.

Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Tentacles
Slaughter Margin: Challenging

Geckamand

The many volcanic and geothermal areas of the Under-Empire are inhabited by a variety of strange and marvellous creatures. One such beast is the pack-hunting geckamand, a dog-sized fire lizard that changes the colour of its scales to blend in with its surroundings. Geckamands are warm-blooded reptiles that thrive in extreme heat. They leave their dens when hunting, but cannot survive for more than a day or two in the relative cold of the Under-Empire.

Geckamands grow to lengths of four feet, standing up to two feet in height at the shoulder. Their spiny scales are naturally a reddish-brown in colour, but the creatures can change the colour of their skin at will, much like a chameleon. Geckamands can also exhale gusts of superheated gas from their mouths, even as they trip and entangle foes with their rubbery, elastic tongues.

—Geckamand Statistics—

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
28%	36%	34%	32%	45%	12%	34%	12%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	8	3	3	6	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment, Perception +10%, Scale Sheer Surface, Silent Move
Talents: Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Tunnel Rat
Special Rules:

- *Camouflage:* The Geckamand can change colour to match its surroundings, granting it a +20% bonus to Concealment Tests.
- *Hot Blooded:* Geckamands are naturally accustomed to hot environments. They take no damage from fire or heat.
- *Superheated Breath:* Once every 3 rounds, a Geckamand can belch forth a gust of superheated gas as a free action. Use the cone template. Any creature in the area takes two Damage 2 hits that ignore armour but not Toughness Bonus.
- *Tongue:* The Geckamand can unfurl its tongue at any creature within 6 yards (3 squares) using its Ballistic Skill. On a successful hit, it wraps its tongue around the victim, entrapping it. While held, the target can do nothing but try to escape. It may make an opposed Strength Test (to break free) or a Challenging (–10%) Agility Test (to wriggle free). In both cases, the attempt to escape is a Full Action. The Geckamand can retract its tongue and bite as a Half Action. Attacks made against ensnared creatures gain a +20% bonus.

Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 2, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1
Weapons: Teeth and claws
Slaughter Margin: Average

Giant Rat

Giant Rats are oversized rodents that dwell in the sewers of the Empire's larger cities, amongst other places. The vile Ratmen use them as cheap and expendable shock troops. Giant Rats typically travel in groups of ten or more and prefer to swarm over their prey in large numbers. A solitary Giant Rat is far more likely to flee than fight, unless he believes his prey wounded or incapable of fighting back.

—Giant Rat Statistics—

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
25%	0%	31%	30%	42%	14%	18%	5%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	7	3	3	6	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment, Perception +10%, Silent Move, Swim +10%
Talents: Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Night Vision
Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Teeth
Slaughter Margin: Routine

Lantern Worm

The Lantern Worm is an intelligent carnivore with a unique method of attracting prey. In truth a centipede rather than a

worm, it attaches its pitch-black carapace to the roof of tunnels using its hundreds of hooked legs. From this position, a single long antenna hangs from its head, the end of which glows brightly and appears, from a distance, to be a mining lantern. As soon as a creature comes into the light, the creature drops from above, ensnaring its meal in its twenty-foot long body. To aid the illusion, Lantern Worms steal or destroy any other light sources they find and then position themselves in the same spot, making them a common bugbear of miners and engineers. Skaven, having little need for lanterns, can typically avoid these creatures, but have been known to lead pursuers into Worm-infested areas.

—Lantern Worm Statistics—

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
44%	0%	38%	38%	60%	24%	31%	5%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
4	18	3	3	7	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment, Perception
Talents: Contortionist, Flee!, Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Night Vision
Special Rules:
- *Armoured Skin:* The Lantern Worm's exoskeleton provides it with 2 Armour Points to all locations.
- *Death from Above*: The Lantern Worm only has to make an Easy (+20%) Concealment Test to gain Surprise.
- *Wall Climbing:* Lantern Worms can climb up and down walls and ceilings with their barbed feet at no Movement penalty.

Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 2, Arms 2, Body 2, Legs 2
Weapons: Mandibles, Claws
Slaughter Margin: Challenging

Plague Rat

Rats, for good reason, have always served at the front ranks of Skaven attacks. And though rats and Ratmen share many similarities, the Skaven have no reservations about bending these rodents to their will and sending wave after wave into the waiting swords of their enemies. And so it has always been that the smaller creatures have served their warped kin.

The Skaven of Clan Pestilens, as a result of their feverish imaginations, took the use of rats a step further. Knowing full well that rats are carriers of noxious disease, they bred a special type of rat, one that would spread one of the most virulent plagues the world has ever known: Neiglish Rot. By dipping Giant Rats into their burbling cauldrons, they infuse them with foul Warpstone-laced wickedness. The rats develop a ravenous appetite, reproduce at a horrific rate, and are vectors for a suitably nasty plague. Plague Rats are thankfully rare, and once a food source is exhausted, they turn on each other until none remain.

Plague Rats look like large rats with patchy brown fur and diseased skin. Their snouts drip orange filth continuously, spilling contagion wherever they go. Worse, most of these creatures suffer from the ravages of the disease they carry, and so are missing legs, paws, half of their heads, and more. Too many can recall seeing one of these sad creatures pulling its rotten hindquarters forward to make a meal of itself.

—Plague Rat Statistics—

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
28%	0%	36%	30%	48%	18%	21%	12%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	9	3	3	6	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment, Perception +10%, Silent Move +10%, Swim +10%
Talents: Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Night Vision
Special Rules:
- *Carrier:* Plague Rats carry a strain of Neiglish Rot (see *WFRP*, page 136-137). Whenever a Plague Rat deals Damage, the subject must make a Challenging (–10%) Toughness Test or contract this horrid disease.

Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Teeth
Slaughter Margin: Average

Rat Mother

These bloated, grotesque baby factories are the only female Skaven known to exist. Each weights at least 700 pounds and measures 10 feet long from snout to tail. Their flabby soft bodies bristle with dozens of protrusions, all of which leak the foul-smelling milk on which their litters are weaned. Often blind and crippled, these creatures cannot care for themselves and must rely on castrated slaves for survival. They spend most of their time in a euphoric haze brought on by constant application of hallucinogens and other drugs.

—Rat Mother Statistics—

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
24%	0%	41%	63%	12%	6%	57%	5%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	26	4	6	2	0	0	0

Skills: Perception +10%
Talents: Acute Hearing, Black Hunger, Natural Weapons, Resistance to Disease, Sixth Sense, Terrifying
Special Rules:
- *Breeder:* When adequately fed and attended, the Rat Mother births a litter of 1d10 squalling Ratlings each week. These creatures reach maturity in 2-3 weeks.

Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Teeth
Slaughter Margin: Average

Rat Ogre

The pinnacle of the Skaven Clan Moulder's debased "art," Rat Ogres are lethal beasts, unnaturally bred up from a variety of creatures using a combination of Warpstone and carefully applied insanity. Each one is subjected to a long series of experiments intended to encourage traits that their creators favour, such as an overwhelming bloodlust and mindless ferocity. Many of them may indeed have Ogre blood in their long and varied ancestry, though none but the eldest Master Mutators could say. They generally appear to be massively over-muscled Skaven standing some 10 feet tall at the shoulder, though many of them are grossly misshapen, and may have grafts, both metal and flesh, fused to their bodies. Rat Ogres exist to kill. They aren't the cleverest combatants, but their great strength and ability to withstand punishment frequently make up for that failing.

—Rat Ogre Statistics—

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36%	0%	54%	47%	25%	12%	17%	10%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
3	28	5	4	6	0	0	0

Skills: Dodge Blow, Intimidate +10%, Perception, Scale Sheer Surface
Talents: Fearless, Frightening, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure
Special Rules:

- *In Need of Direction:* Rat Ogres have been systematically bred for a single purpose: fighting at the command of a Clan Moulder handler. Without a clear set of orders, or a commanding Skaven to lead them, they mill about uncertainly. Rat Ogres attack and attempt to kill anything that harms them, but their behaviour otherwise is highly erratic if they've lost their handler or finished following their last order. A Rat Ogre that wishes to engage in any other sort of behaviour other than standing around drooling must make a Will Power Test or stare aimlessly at nothing.

Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Claws
Slaughter Margin: Routine

Rat Swarm

Rat Swarms are colonies of Rats that have formed a sort of mobile community. Rats' natural instincts are to congregate, and these are further trained to act and move as one, having been bonded through breeding, recognition of scent, and the application of drugs and other stimuli. Existing apart from its swarm is as unnatural for one of these Rats as standing in a fire or breathing water. A skilled Packmaster can keep these swarms of vermin together as a single, directed group, even on the battlefield, and can direct them as he wills. Numbering upwards of 100 rats per swarm, these rats are a mix of brown, black, and white rats. The sight of a Rat Swarm is enough to make any commoner and none too few warriors turn tail and flee.

—Rat Swarm Statistics—

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
32%	0%	48%	36%	48%	6%	12%	5%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	16	4	3	6	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment, Dodge Blow, Perception +20%, Silent Move, Swim +10%
Talents: Keen Senses, Frenzy, Frightening, Natural Weapons, Night Vision
Special Rules:

- *Swarm:* If a Rat Swarm successfully deals Damage to its opponent, it automatically moves into its space. Each round thereafter, the Rat Swarm gains a +20% bonus to Weapon Skill Tests against that target. The target also takes a –20% penalty to all Tests while covered in rats.

A Rat Swarm reduced to 0 Wounds is dispersed and the individual rats flee in all directions.

Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Lots of Teeth
Slaughter Margin: Hard

Rat-Wolf

In times long ago, Clan Moulder experimented with combining their Skaven blood with that of the great wolves of Kislev. The result was a bloodthirsty monster of such foul temperament that the Master Moulders could hardly contain it, much less train it for war. They managed to wipe out nearly all of the creatures, but despite their best efforts, a few escaped into the tunnels of the Under-Empire. In the intervening years, some escaped altogether, but a few remained behind to hunt their Skaven creators.

Rat-Wolves are distinctive creatures, blending the appearance of both Skaven and Wolves. Covered in a thick pelt of grey fur flecked with white, they have shorter legs than their Skaven ancestors, keeping them low to the ground and suggesting that they are always ready to pounce. Their natural gait is to move on four legs, which only makes their ability to clumsily grasp and manipulate objects with their forepaws that much more horrifying. Their tales are long, pale, and naked of fur, and they have broad rat-like heads filled with sharp yellow canine teeth.

—Rat-Wolf Statistics—							
Main Profile							
WS	**BS**	**S**	**T**	**Ag**	**Int**	**WP**	**Fel**
32%	0%	34%	32%	44%	18%	25%	8%
Secondary Profile							
A	**W**	**SB**	**TB**	**M**	**Mag**	**IP**	**FP**
1	10	3	3	6	0	0	0

Skills: Follow Trail +10%, Outdoor Survival, Perception +10%, Silent Move +10%, Swim
Talents: Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Tunnel Rat
Special Rules:

- *Scent:* Rat-wolves have a powerful sense of smell. They gain a +30% bonus to Follow Trails Tests.

Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Teeth and claws
Slaughter Margin: Average

Tregara

The pale, stone-coloured shell of the Tregara is often mistaken for part of a chamber's ceiling—that is, until the Tregara extends its arms and snatches up it unwary prey. Similar in form to a praying mantis, the Tregara is a blind subterranean insect that uses vibrations in the air around it to hunt prey. These creatures can grow to be up to eight feet in length, and their dangerous claws and mandibles are the subjects of many Skaven nightmares.

—Tregara Statistics—							
Main Profile							
WS	**BS**	**S**	**T**	**Ag**	**Int**	**WP**	**Fel**
38%	0%	40%	35%	38%	18%	32%	10%
Secondary Profile							
A	**W**	**SB**	**TB**	**M**	**Mag**	**IP**	**FP**
2	25	4	3	6	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment +10%, Scale Sheer Surface +10%
Talents: Natural Weapons, Tunnel Rat, Wrestling
Special Rules:

- *Armoured Skin:* The Tregara's exoskeleton provides it with 2 Armour Points on all locations.
- *Barbed Forearms:* The Tregara's barbed forelegs grant it a +10% bonus to Weapon Skill Tests when grappling.
- *Wall Climber:* The tips of a Tregara's feet are equipped with tiny hooks, enabling it to cling to even sheer surfaces. Tregara have a +20% bonus to Scale Sheer Surface Tests.

Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 2, Arms 2, Body 2, Legs 2
Weapons: Claws and jaws
Slaughter Margin: Hard

Tunnel Rusher

Also known as Horse Rats, Tunnel Rushers are believed to be a failed experiment of Clan Moulder. These six-legged monstrosities were designed to be beasts of burden, applying the strength of the Rat Ogre to pulling mine carts, chariots and Screaming Bells. Clan Chieftains quickly realised, however, that an equal weight of slaves eat far less and are far more motivated by fear, so the Rushers were let loose. Somehow they have survived and the Skaven now occasionally use them for food. Although terrifyingly fast, they tend to panic in battle, and as they only eat refuse they are of little threat to man or beast. However, a raging stampede of them can panic an entire army, and the Skaven use this fact to their advantage whenever they can.

—Tunnel Rusher Statistics—							
Main Profile							
WS	**BS**	**S**	**T**	**Ag**	**Int**	**WP**	**Fel**
25%	0%	55%	47%	25%	5%	20%	0%
Secondary Profile							
A	**W**	**SB**	**TB**	**M**	**Mag**	**IP**	**FP**
1	20	5	4	9	0	0	0

Skills: Perception
Talents: Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Stun
Special Rules:

- *Stampede!:* A Tunnel Rusher may perform the Run action without melee attacks against it gaining the standard +20% bonus. If the Rusher moves into

a character's square, that character must make a Challenging (–10%) Agility Test or be knocked down (with the usual penalties). While knocked down they may be Trampled by other Rushers: these attacks cannot be Parried and count as having the Impact quality.

Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Claws
Slaughter Margin: Challenging

Warp Bat

The upper caverns of the Under-Empire are home to hundreds of different species of bats. But these are not all of the bats that dwell in the lightless world of these endless tunnels. One breed lives deep, far below even Hell Pit, and they feast on Warpstone, hence their name: Warp Bats. Skaven miners are always watchful for these creatures, as their presence is a good indication that a lode of Warpstone is nearby.

Warp Bats are similar in appearance to normal bats, although their fur is pale and their bodies are bloated, distorted by constant exposure to Warpstone. Due to their increased size, which can occasionally rival that of a horse, Warp Bats are unable to fly. Instead they move by crawling quickly across the ground and walls of their underground domain. Like other bats, they use a series of high-pitched shrieks and chirps to create a sort of sonar, allowing them to navigate in total darkness.

—Warp Bat Statistics—

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37%	0%	24%	20%	48%	12%	16%	10%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	8	2	2	6	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment, Perception +10%, Scale Sheer Surface, Silent Move
Talents: Acute Hearing, Natural Weapons, Resistance to Chaos, Tunnel Rat
Special Rules:

- *Deafening Shriek:* Once per three rounds, a Warp Bat can loose a powerful, deafening shriek to disorient its opponents. Centre the large template on the Warp Bat. Any creature in the affected area must succeed at a Challenging (–10%) Toughness Test or be deafened for 1d10 hours.
- *Echolocation:* Warp Bats use their shrill cries to navigate and detect prey.
- *Warping Bite:* Any creature that suffers damage from a Warp Bat's bite must succeed at a Toughness Test or develop 1 mutation in 1d10 days.

Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Bite
Slaughter Margin: Routine

Warpslime

Warpslime is a living, partially aware, and entirely unnatural creature that is born as a result of extensive Warpstone experimentation in a contained environment. This sticky ooze glows the same colour as that unholy stone and burns the skin like the blasts of a warpfire thrower, but its most dangerous property is its hunger for metal, particularly iron and copper. It needs to feed regularly on these, and creeps a long way to find them. Skaven engineers keep piles of scrap metal handy to throw into these pools at regular intervals, lest their work suddenly dissolve (and then explode) before their eyes. When they run out of scrap metal, they use slaves instead, because in a pinch the slime makes do with the minerals it finds in blood.

—Warpslime Statistics—

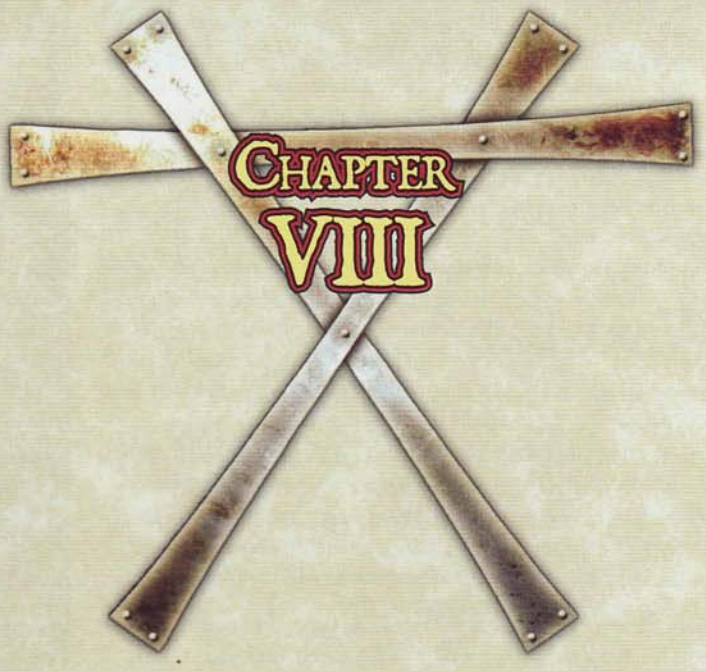
Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33%	0%	41%	10%	5%	—	—	—
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
3	36	4	1	1	0	0	0

Skills: None
Talents: None
Special Rules:

- *Metal Eater:* If the Warpslime's attack hits a location protected by metal armour (chain or plate), it does no damage but instead reduces the Armour Points of that location by 1. Once the creature has devoured 12 points of armour in this way, it ceases attacking and becomes dormant for 24 hours. Adventurers may thus "defeat" the creature by throwing sufficient pieces of armour into the ooze (make a Ballistic Skill Test with a +20% bonus). If using the Basic Armour system, this will reduce Heavy Armour to Medium Armour, or Medium Armour to Light Armour, for one character. Alternatively, 150 Encumbrance points of metal objects also suffices—or the blood of 20 people.
- *Mindless:* Warpslime has no Intelligence, Will Power or Fellowship and can never take or fail Tests based on these Characteristics.
- *Mutating:* Characters who are reduced to 0 Wounds by Warpslime must immediately make a Toughness Test. Failure indicates they have gained a mutation.
- *Ooze:* This creature is more a natural phenomenon than a beast. It is immune to Fear, Terror, stunning, poison, disease and all spells, skills and effects that involve the manipulation of the emotions or the mind. Only magical weapons, spells or fire can damage the slime; non-magical fire only does one point of damage per hit. All hits are assumed to hit the Body location, and the Sudden Death Critical Rules should always be used. In combat, oozes can perform only the Standard Attack, Swift Attack or Move actions.

Armour: None
Armour Points: Body 0
Weapons: Oozey Appendages
Slaughter Margin: Very Hard

Slaves of Destiny



"Little rats have bigger rats,
Amongst their ranks to guide 'em,
And bigger rats have giant rats,
And so on, ad infinitum."

—Children's Rhyme

"I have no interest in fighting the figments of peasants."

—Sir Aghmar, Knight Panther

Slaves of Destiny is an adventure for characters in their second careers. It takes place in Dotternbach, a village in Wissenland, though the scenario can be adapted to a different locale fairly easily. Nearly any village with livestock will do. *Slaves of Destiny* introduces the characters to the depredations of the Skaven. This may be the first time they encounter the vile Ratmen; if they are true adventurers, it surely won't be the last.

Starting the Adventure

Slaves of Destiny begins when the characters arrive in Dotternbach. You can contrive any convenient way to get them there. Some suggestions follow:

- A merchant in Nuln or Wissenburg is nearly apoplectic because the shipments of wool he was expecting from Dotternbach have not arrived. Since he is losing money for each day that he cannot fill his orders, he hires the PCs to go to Dotternbach and find out what the hold up is.
- A friend or mentor of one of the PCs has retired to Dotternbach to pursue a quiet life in the countryside. This person can provide assistance (such as advice, money, or contacts) the PCs need in one of their other adventures, so they travel to Dotternbach to get what they need.
- The PCs are simply travelling somewhere else and the village makes a convenient stopping point. If you use this option, the business they are on should not be too pressing. It's important that they feel they have a day or two to spend looking into the goings on in Dotternbach.

Background

Dotternbach is a good-sized village with a thriving wool trade located near the provincial capital of Wissenburg. Since Wissenland is in the south of the Empire, the entire region escaped the ravages of the Storm of Chaos. A few men of Dotternbach joined a Free Company that came through the village on the way north, but otherwise life went on as it had for uncounted generations. Until three weeks ago, that is.

At first it seemed like nothing. A few sheep went missing, but that's not all that unusual. When the disappearances continued, the villagers thought they might be facing local bandits. Two weeks ago the local miller disappeared. Some said he fled but others said he was taken. Then the villagers started to hear strange noises at night and other livestock also began to go missing. Three days before the PCs arrive, the villagers' worst fears were realized when they found the body of the local militia sergeant in a nearby field. Not only was he slain, but parts of him seemed to be missing. The village is now on the verge of hysteria.

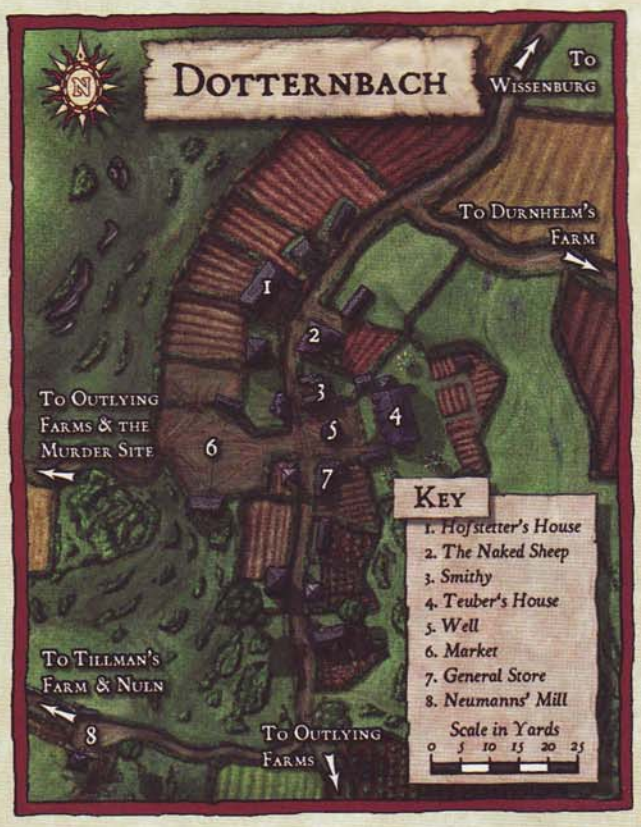
The cause of Dotternbach's woes is a renegade group of Skaven slaves. They escaped from the Warlord Clan holding them in thrall and made their way through disused tunnels to the area near Dotternbach. When they arrived, emaciated and starving, they began to feed on the village's sheep. Knowing that their Clan's hunting parties must be looking for them with the hopes of recapturing them, they are now lying low in a warren under the village mill. The slaves were right to fear, for a Skaven hunting party is indeed in the area. The militia sergeant was patrolling the pastures when he blundered into an ambush

meant for the escaped slaves. The hunters and the slaves are on a collision course, and Dotternbach lies between them. Only the PCs can help the villages avoid a grim fate.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins when the PCs arrive in Dotternbach. They find the village gripped with fear. Only the bravest work the fields and most families are keeping inside until the crisis passes. Some villagers treat the PCs suspiciously while others beg for their help. Clearly, something is amiss in Dotternbach.

The PCs interview several of the villagers and look for clues. Their efforts are hampered somewhat by last night's rainstorm, which washed away all recent tracks. Eventually, they discover a small warren beneath the mill. The former Skaven slaves are hiding here and the PCs can dispatch them with relative ease. If they feel that these Skaven weren't much of a threat, they are right. Miraculously, the PCs discover a man named Hubert in the warrens. He too was a slave of the Skaven and escaped with the others. Enslavement has shattered the man's mind and body but he is lucid enough to explain what happened to him. He can also tell the PCs something even more crucial: a Skaven hunting party is in the area. If they cannot bring back the missing slaves, they may just raid Dotternbach and get new ones. It is up to the PCs to defend the village from the Skaven raiders or more people of the Empire will end up enslaved by the vile Ratmen.



Adventure Structure

There are only two fixed encounters in *Slaves of Destiny*: the Slave Warren and the Hunting Party. The rest of the adventure involves investigating the goings-on in Dotternbach and the order and pacing of this is largely up the PCs. For this reason, the next section of the adventure concentrates on the people of Dotternbach. The important NPCs know certain facts important to the mystery that PCs can uncover by interviewing them and making Gossip Tests where appropriate. As always, the degree to which dice rolls impact roleplaying is up to the individual GM.

Of course, there is more going on in Dotternbach than the Skaven threat. Several subplots have been provided and facts pertinent to these are also noted in the NPC descriptions. The PCs can pursue these subplots or ignore them; it's up to them. The GM may also want to expand these subplots and use them as the basis for further adventures. The subplots are:

- *The Bad Friar:* Two months ago Dotternbach's mayor died, seemingly of natural causes. A wandering holy man, Friar Eckel, who had come to the village only days before, stayed on to comfort the grieving widow. He has been living at the mayor's home ever since and has become the trusted confidant of Frau Hofstetter, the mayor's widow. The friar has made himself at home and is quite enjoying the situation. He does not take kindly to outsiders who might ruin his sweet set-up.
- *The Man from Tilea:* The most successful merchant in Dotternbach, Kaspar Teuber, borrowed some Marks from a Tilean moneylender. He needed it to bribe some recalcitrant officials in Wissenburg, but was sure his

Common Knowledge

Everyone in Dotternbach is familiar with recent events. Any villager can tell the PCs the following:

- The mayor, Emil Hofstetter, died three months ago in his sleep. Since then the town has been receiving guidance from Friar Eckel.
- Sheep began to disappear about three weeks ago. This happens from time to time, but the loss has been steady and none of the missing sheep have returned.
- Kaspar Teuber is an influential merchant and the most important man in the village's wool trade. It is rumoured that he killed an Orc in his wild youth.
- The local miller, Frediger Neumann, and his wife and small son went missing two weeks ago.
- Folks have been afraid to work since the Neumanns disappeared.
- Strange growling and scratching noises have been heard at night for the past week.
- Three days ago the militia sergeant, Tilmann, was found murdered in an outlying pasture.
- There was a fierce rainstorm last night. This is surely a sign that the village's troubles aren't over.

revenues would allow him to pay the money back on time. And he would have been right if the Skaven slaves had not shut down commerce. Now the man from Tilea is on his way to collect and he doesn't take no for an answer.

- *Unjust Rewards:* Tilmann, the militia sergeant who was killed, was not supposed to be on patrol alone. Durnhelm, who was meant to accompany Tilmann, ducked the sergeant and spent the night in the pub instead. He was still hung over when news of Tilmann's death reached him. To make his guilt even worse, Friar Eckel has made Durnhelm the new sergeant.

Typical Dotternbacher

Use these stats for any other adult villagers the PCs may encounter.

Career: Peasant
Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
24%	29%	30%	27%	28%	26%	28%	30%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	3	2	4	0	0	0

Skills: Animal Care, Animal Training, Charm Animal, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Concealment, Drive, Gamble, Gossip, Set Trap, Scale Sheer Surface, Speak (Reikspiel), Trade (Farmer)
Talents: Flee!, Hardy, Resistance to Disease, Rover
Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Dagger
Trappings: Pouch with 1d10 *s*, 2d10 *p*

Typical Militiamen

Use these stats for the 8 men that Durnhelm now leads.

Career: Militiaman
Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
26%	24%	30%	34%	28%	26%	28%	31%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	3	3	4	0	0	0

Skills: Animal Care, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Dodge Blow, Drive, Gamble, Gossip, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Search, Speak (Reikspiel), Trade (Farmer)
Talents: Hardy, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Very Resilient
Armour: Light Armour (Leather Jerkin)
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 1, Legs 0
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Club) and Shield
Trappings: Pouch with 1d10 *s*, 2d10 *p*

Villagers

After the recent deaths and disappearances, Dotternbach's population stands at 90. Most of the villagers are farmers and herdsmen. The most important Dotternbachers are described in the following section. In addition to general background and personality, each entry also includes a breakdown of what the character knows regarding the various plots. Clues in the Skaven mystery are labelled *Main Plot*, while those from the subplots are labelled *The Bad Friar*, *The Man from Tilea*, and *Unjust Rewards*, respectively.

Abelhard, Innkeeper

Abelhard is the proprietor of Dotternbach's only inn, the Naked Sheep. The inn has been in his family for generations and he runs it with the help of his two daughters, Greta and Gudrun. His wife died of the pox six years ago. The Naked Sheep has a large main room, a kitchen, a basement storeroom, and six rooms upstairs, one of which Abelhard shares with his daughters.

The village's wool trade means regular business for Abelhard and he is keen to restore order. If the PCs are just passing through Dotternbach, it is Abelhard who will try to recruit them to help the village. He doesn't have much to offer them but free room and board while they investigate the mystery.

Abelhard learned from his parents that his clients' business was not his own. He provides a willing ear to anyone who needs it, but he prides himself on his ability to keep secrets. He is always friendly to travellers, but woe to those who pay too much attention to his daughters. With his wife dead, he is fiercely protective of Greta and Gudrun.

What Abelhard Knows

The PCs can find out the following from Abelhard, plus any info from the Common Knowledge sidebar.

- *Main Plot:* On several nights Abelhard heard bestial growling near the inn. One night he swears he heard something big scratching on the back door.
- *Main Plot:* The missing sheep were all poached from herds that graze near the mill.
- *Main Plot:* The miller, Herr Neumann, was an ex-soldier. He never said much about his time serving the Emperor, but sometimes he got a haunted look in his eyes.
- *The Bad Friar:* Friar Eckel is now living in the Frau Hofstetter's house. She says that he is comforting her in her time of mourning.

- *The Man from Tilea:* Kaspar Teuber is the only Dotternbacher that drinks the good wine, but even he has been sticking to beer of late. He says it's for a change of pace, but Abelhard has seen him eying the wine bottles dejectedly.
- *Unjust Rewards:* Now-Sergeant Durnhelm had to be roused from an alcoholic stupor when Sergeant Tilmann was found slain. Durnhelm has been drinking more than usual since his promotion.

Game Stats: If stats for Abelhard are needed, use those for Proprietors (see *WFRP*, page 235).

Durnhelm, Militia Sergeant

Durnhelm is a local who has never left his home village. He and his brother inherited the family farm when their parents died. Both brothers joined the local militia, as soldiering promised excitement that farming did not. During the Storm of Chaos, the brothers agreed that one of them would go fight and the other would stay and run the farm. They drew straws and Durnhelm lost. His brother Lanric joined one of the Free Companies that passed through Dotternbach on the way north. Lanric never returned and no word of him has reached the village.

There was a time when Durnhelm was energetic and ambitious. Now he is sullen and morose. He fears his brother is dead, and this has led to him spending more time drinking than he used to. Ducking Tilmann on patrol night so he could drown his sorrows has made him feel even worse, and he blames himself for the Sergeant's death. His own promotion just twisted the knife of guilt in his gut.

What Durnhelm Knows

The PCs can find out the following from Durnhelm, plus any info from the Common Knowledge sidebar.

- *Main Plot:* He has led militia patrols all over the outlying village land and found little. They did find some strange animal tracks, but these were washed away by last night's rain. None of the militiamen could identify the tracks, but they seemed to belong to a sizeable creature.
- *Main Plot:* It isn't just sheep that have gone missing. Other livestock has also disappeared.
- *The Bad Friar:* The relationship between Frau Hofstetter and Friar Eckel is closer than one would expect from a widow and a holy man. Eckel seems worldlier each week and has now taken to wearing the former mayor's clothes around the house.
- *The Man from Tilea:* Kaspar Teuber asked to be notified the moment any "swarthy strangers" show up in Dotternbach.

Durnhelm

Career: Militiaman
Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
37%	29%	31%	34%	28%	31%	29%	30%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	3	3	5	0	0	0

Skills: Animal Care, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Dodge Blow, Drive, Gamble, Gossip, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Search, Speak (Reikspiel), Trade (Farmer)
Talents: Fleet Footed, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Very Resilient
Armour: Light Armour (Leather Jack)
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 0
Weapons: Halberd, Hand Weapon (Sword), and Shield
Trappings: Pouch with 5 *s*.

Friar Eckel, Village Leader

Friar Eckel is a mendicant who found religion after a life of iniquity on the road. He has tried to live by the precepts of his order, but while wandering the byways of the Empire he occasionally falls back into his old habits. He arrived in Dotternbach a few days before Mayor Hofstetter died. Sensing opportunity, he cornered the widow and laid the religious rhetoric on thick. Soon he was "comforting" her every day, and within weeks he had moved into the mayor's former home. A new mayor has not been appointed yet, so in the interim the Friar has taken it upon himself to lead this flock. While settling down in a comfortable home is not all what his order preaches, Friar Eckel has convinced himself that Dotternbach needs him. In truth, he's just as much of a liar and a manipulator as he's always been. Now he just hides it behind a religious veneer.

Friar Eckel could be used to pull the PCs into the adventure. He has a roguish past and may have been a companion or mentor to one of the PCs. He may reach out to an old friend to help him resolve the current situation.

At first the good Friar seems like a calm and measured man of religion, and this facade holds if you do what he wants. If his wishes are defied, he first tries to use the weight of Sigmar's church and teachings against those who stand in his way. If that doesn't work, he flies into a rage and begins to threaten and cajole. The villagers have not yet seen this side of him.

What Friar Eckel Knows

The PCs can find out the following from Friar Eckel, plus any info from the Common Knowledge sidebar.

- *Main Plot:* He sent Sergeant Tilmann to investigate the mill after the Neumann family disappeared. Tilmann found no sign of them, and their wagon was also missing.
- *Main Plot:* He officiated at Sergeant Tilmann's funeral and prepared the body for burial. The corpse was a mess and many internal organs were missing.
- *The Man from Tilea:* A Tilean thug came to Dotternbach two weeks back. When he was caught pointing a dagger at Kaspar Teuber, the militia tossed him out of town. It was at first thought that the Tilean led bandits back to Dotternbach to prey on the village, but militia patrols turned up nothing.
- *Unjust Rewards:* Friar Eckel chose Durnhelm to be the new militia sergeant after Tilmann was slain. Durnhelm seemed the best man for the job, but was not excited by the promotion.

Friar Eckel

Career: Friar (ex-Vagabond)
Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30%	31%	30%	46%	23%	37%	27%	48%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	14	3	4	4	0	4	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology), Common Knowledge (the Empire, Tilea), Gossip +10%, Haggle, Heal, Navigation, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Performer (Storyteller), Silent Move, Speak Language (Reikspiel, Tilean)
Talents: Luck, Orientation, Rover, Seasoned Traveller, Very Resilient
Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Hand Weapon (Hammer)
Trappings: Fake relic ("the shinbone of St. Gospar"), religious symbol, robes, purse with 5 *gc.*

Kaspar Teuber, Chief Merchant

Background: There are many stories told about him in Dotternbach; some are even true. Kaspar was trained as a cartographer by an old explorer of some renown. His mentor's tales inspired him to join several expeditions to the distant east. His adventuring years were memorable and profitable. He still talks of travelling the Silver Road and his many close scrapes with death. His favourite story is about "fabled Katan," which he attempted to map in detail but the geography of which changed from day to day. Eventually, Kaspar retired and used his earnings to set himself up in the wool business in Dotternbach. He yearned for simple village life after years of adventure. Over the last 15 years he has become the dominant merchant in the village and controls all the important trade. His house, which is fairly modest by city standards, is a veritable mansion as far as the Dotternbachers are concerned and is easily the largest structure in the village. The Dotternbachers are respectful and even deferential towards Kaspar.

As mentioned previously, Kaspar is in debt to a Tilean moneylender named Alphonse (known as "the Big D" for reasons that are obscure). One of Alphonse's goons came to Dotternbach two weeks ago to remind Kaspar (at the point of a dagger) that he better pay up on time. That time is now fast approaching and with commerce all but shutdown in Dotternbach, Herr Teuber is desperate to avoid losing his fingers …or his life.

Kaspar Teuber could be used to pull the PCs into the adventure. He was an adventurer years ago and may have been a mentor to one of the PCs. He needs all the friends he can muster to restore his business and deal with Alphonse.

Kaspar Teuber is a colourful character, the antithesis of the staid businessman. He is friendly and outgoing and likes to get to know the people he does business with. Although he seems like an open book, he is quite skilled at keeping his problems private and he will be reluctant to trust strangers with any of his secrets.

What Kaspar Teuber Knows

The PCs can find out the following from Kaspar Teuber, plus any info from the Common Knowledge sidebar.

- *Main Plot:* Dotternbach's militia is poorly trained. The best of them, Sergeant Tilmann, was the man found slain.
- *Main Plot:* He saw the remains of Sergeant Tilmann when they brought him back to town. He does not think what killed him was human. The wounds were too savage.
- *The Bad Friar:* It is highly unusual for a mendicant to stay in one place as long as Friar Eckel has been in Dotternbach.
- *Unjust Rewards:* Kaspar saw now-Sergeant Durnhelm at the pub the night Tilmann was killed.
- *The Man from Tilea:* The Tilean thug who threatened him is not connected to the village's larger problems. That had to do with his "personal business" and is, he asserts, of no concern to the PCs.

Kaspar Teuber

Career: Merchant (ex-Tradesman, ex-Outrider)
Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
31%	38%	35%	32%	41%	46%	35%	45%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	3	3	4	0	4	0

Skills: Animal Care, Charm, Common Knowledge (Bretonnia, the Empire), Drive, Evaluate +10%, Follow Trail, Gossip, Haggle +10%, Navigation, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Read/Write, Ride, Search, Secret Language (Guild Tongue), Silent Move, Speak Language (Breton, Reikspiel), Trade (Cartographer, Merchant +10%)
Talents: Dealmaker, Orientation, Savvy, Specialist Weapon Group (Entangling), Super Numerate, Very Strong
Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: Dagger
Trappings: Purse with 10 *gc.*

The Mill

At some point the PCs are likely to investigate the mill, since the Neumann family has disappeared and there may be clues about. They may also want to see the murder site of Sergeant Tilmann but there is nothing to be found there; the rain has washed away any remaining tracks.

The Neumann family, it turns out, is alive and well. They've just fled the area. Frediger woke up in the middle of the night and saw three of the Skaven slaves dragging a dead sheep to their new warren. He had fought Skaven when he served in the Imperial Army and knew he didn't want to face them again. After a tense night, Neumann gathered up his family, put their few possessions in the wagon, and hit the road for Pfeildorf. They have not looked back.

The mill is a two-storey structure, with the millstone in a large main chamber and a family apartment above it. There is little to be found there apart from bits of mouldering grain and one pair of soiled trousers tossed in a corner. It does seem that most of the family's personal effects are missing. The stable that housed the wagon and horse is also empty.

A search of the surrounding grounds is more fruitful. Several sheep bones lying in the mud have been exposed by the rainstorm. PCs checking out this area will notice a roughly two-foot-wide hole near a fencepost with a successful Routine (+10%) Perception Test. This is the entrance to the Slave Warren.

The Slave Warren

The PCs discover that the hole leads to a narrow tunnel. Whatever is down there, it smells like a charnel house. PCs that don't take some precaution (trying a rag over their nose and mouth, for example) suffer a –5% penalty on all tests while in the warren.

The muddy tunnel leads steeply downward for 30 feet and then opens up into a roughly circular chamber with a 40-foot diameter. There used to be another tunnel that led into the warren (this is how the slaves got here) but they collapsed it to protect themselves from pursuit and it is now impassable. The warren is full of refuse, sheep bones, and other unidentifiable detritus. It is a dark, foul hole.

The escaped Skaven slaves usually sleep during the day but one stays on guard and will rouse the others if anyone enters the

tunnel from above. These creatures are desperate and will fight desperately to save themselves. They are ill equipped and in poor health, however, so the fight should not take that long.

There are 6 Skaven slaves in all. Use the Skaven slave stats in the **Appendix** for the encounter.

Lone Survivor

The Skaven slaves are not much of a challenge, and the PCs may be surprised at the ease with which they've dispatched their foes. Hidden in the cave is a survivor, however, who can shed some light on the situation. He is Hubert, a Human who was also enslaved by the Skaven and who broke out with the Ratmen. He is concealed under a pile of filthy rags. When the fighting is over and Hubert sees that attackers are not other Skaven, he reveals himself. "Praise Sigmar you've come! I am a man of the Empire and never thought to see my kind again."

Although the scrawny, filth-covered wretch in front of them barely looks Human, he speaks perfect Reikspiel. A closer look confirms that he is indeed a man, though his wild eyes and haunted expressions make it clear he's had quite an ordeal. He requires little prompting to tell his story:

> *"I am a man of Nuln and a shopkeep by trade. Many months ago—I am not sure how many—I awoke to scrabbling noises in my basement. When I investigated, I found that something had burrowed through the wall. Then something struck me from behind and I blacked out. When I awoke again, I was*

sure I was living a nightmare. I was kept under the earth, in the thrall of the Ratmen. I cannot describe the fear and horror of the slave pits. Creatures of many races fight for survival under the whip of cruel masters. My time there seemed interminable and I was sure I would die without ever seeing the sun again. Some of the slaves planned a breakout, though, and I ran when they did. I followed them down long-abandoned tunnels and ended up here. They threatened to kill me every day, but they decided to keep me alive . . . for bait, they said, or trade when they made their way to another Skaven pit. They hoped to lie low until the Skaven hunting parties had given up on finding us. I knew we were near an Imperial village, but they would not let me leave this hole for fear of me betraying them. When I heard your approach, I thought you were Skaven warriors. Praise Sigmar that you were not."

Hubert is desperate to escape the Skaven warren and return to civilisation. If the PCs clean him up and feed him a decent meal, he is more than forthcoming with information. Since the man has been through hell, he is not used to Human society and may come across as a bit demented. He has not seen a woman in a long time and is particularly awkward around them. He is worth talking to, however, as he has some key information. The PCs can find out the following from Hubert, all of which relate to the main plot:

- It was the Skaven slaves who were stealing the sheep and livestock. They were desperately hungry when they arrived and needed food badly.
- They did not kill the miller and his family. Hubert does not know anything about their fate.
- He does not believe they killed Sergeant Tilmann either.
- The slaves lived in fear of hunting parties from the Warlord Clan that they escaped from. Recently the slaves saw some Giant Rats coming out of the village late at night. This means that at least one Skaven hunting party is on their tail.
- If the hunting party cannot bring back the escaped slaves, they'll almost certainly attack Dotternbach to get fresh slaves. The villagers are in terrible danger.

Hubert

Career: Slave (ex-Burgher)
Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
28%	27%	31%	36%	28%	35%	33%	25%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	11	3	3	4	0	7	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire, Skaven), Consume Alcohol, Drive, Evaluate, Gossip, Haggle, Perception, Read/Write, Search, Speak (Reikspiel +10%, Queekish, Tilean)
Talents: Dealmaker, Flee!, Luck, Resistance to Disease, Savvy
Insanities: Knives of Memory (Skaven torture)
Armour: None
Armour Points: Head 0, Arms 0, Body 0, Legs 0
Weapons: None
Trappings: None

The Hunting Party

Hubert is right. A Skaven hunting party is nearby and it was they that took Sergeant Tilmann's life. They are using the Giant Rats to scout the area and these creatures have rooted around the village on more than one evening. Abelhard heard one of these rats scratching at his door and the escaped Skaven slaves saw several leaving Dotternbach one night. They are also the source of the strange tracks Durnhelm saw.

Slaves of Destiny isn't over until the Hunting Party is dealt with somehow. There isn't one right way to end the adventure. Much depends on your own desires as a GM and, as always, the actions of the PCs. There are five basic options for wrapping things up.

- If you want to end things quickly, the hunting party could attack the Skaven warren while the PCs are still talking to Hubert. They could burst through the sealed off tunnel using arcane Skaven technology and then attack the PCs. They will be quite angry that their slaves have been killed.
- The PCs could try to misdirect the Skaven and resolve the situation without a fight. They could move the bodies of the dead slaves, for example, and leave an easy-to-follow trail of blood or cast offs. If the hunting party is lured far enough away from Dotternbach, they may not come back to attack the village for fresh slaves.
- The PCs can prepare Dotternbach for an attack and defend the village. In many ways, this is the most rewarding option, as it allows the PCs to use what they've learned about Dotternbach in planning their defence. It also gives them a good reason to continue their interactions with the important NPCs and to resolve the various subplots.
- The PCs could go out on a hunting party of their own and try to locate and neutralize the Skaven before they attack. The Skaven are camped about a mile from Dotternbach in a small forest. Getting the drop on them will be difficult. Operating in daylight is the best PC tactic.
- The PCs could simply leave, telling the villagers that with the death of the Skaven slaves the situation has been resolved. You'll want to adjust the XP award if they choose this option, giving them half the recommend award at best. They are abandoning Dotternbach, likely wilfully, to an ugly fate.

The Opposition

You need to decide on the final composition of the hunting party, depending on what the PCs do, what their capabilities are, and how challenging you want this encounter to be. Use the stats in **Appendix I** to create the hunting party. The appendix has all sorts of options. The only must is a few Giant Rats (see the **Under-Empire Bestiary** for stats) and a core of Clanrats (whose stats are repeated here for convenience). Some example compositions follow; feel free to modify these to suit your needs.

- Clawleader, 8 Clanrats, 2 Giant Rats, 3 Gutter Runners.
- Clawleader, Apprentice Grey Seer, 2 Black Skaven, 6 Clanrats, 2 Giant Rats, 2 Gutter Runners.
- Apprentice Grey Seer, 2 Black Skaven, 8 Clanrats, 3 Giant Rats, 2 Gutter Runners.

If the PCs are going to defend the village, you can make the Skaven attack even larger to keep things challenging, since the PCs will have the militia and other potential allies.

Clanrats

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30%	25%	30%	30%	40%	25%	25%	15%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	9	3	3	5	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (Skaven) +10%, Concealment, Outdoor Survival, Perception, Scale Sheer Surface, Silent Move, Speak Language (Queekish), Swim
Talents: Night Vision, Specialist Weapon Group (Sling), Tunnel Rat
Armour: Light Armour (Leather Jack and Leather Skullcap)
Armour Points: Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 0
Weapons: Hand Weapon, Dagger *or* Sling, Shield
Trappings: None

The Skaven Assault

If the PCs decide to defend Dotternbach, they have their work cut out for them. You should give the PCs a copy of the village map to work with (at this point, there should be nothing on it they don't know about) and let them plan. The Skaven are almost certainly going to attack at night, as they all have Night Vision. This will make it hard to see them coming at any distance. If there are Gutter Runners in the hunting party, they also have stealth on their side. Challenges the PCs may face in preparing for the assault include:

- The first thing the PCs will have to do is convince the Dotternbachers that the threat is real. The villagers do not believe Skaven really exist. Showing them the bodies of the Skaven slaves does the trick, though it also adds to the fear that has already gripped the village.
- Friar Eckel will not like the PCs assuming command of the village, as it undercuts his authority. He may try to forestall this from happening, particularly if he's already clashed with the PCs.
- The remaining militiamen have poor morale after the death of Sergeant Tilmann. It'll be even worse if the truth about Sergeant Durnhelm is known. This is an excellent opportunity for inspiring speeches and/or strategic use of the Command skill.
- During the preparations, the man from Tilea and his goons may arrive to collect from Kaspar Teuber. This could complicate an already dangerous situation. "Big D" and his men could certainly be fought, but that might weaken the village's defences and take key characters out of action. Negotiating with them to help out on the defence of the village is one option, though that may leave the PCs in his debt. If you do not use the man from Tilea in the lead up to the Skaven Assault, he should arrive the following day so the subplot can resolve. Perhaps defeating the Skaven will give the villagers the fighting mindset and inspiration they need to take on the bullies!
- The women and children need to be protected somehow. They could simply be sent away until the danger is passed, though they'll need some of the militia to guard them on the road. One or more of the village buildings could also be turned into a stronghold to protect them.

Turning the Tables

Although this adventure is designed for a typical adventuring party, you could turn the whole thing around and use it for Skaven PCs if you are running a Ratman campaign. In this scenario, the PCs would comprise the hunting party looking for the escaped slaves. They must prove themselves to their clan by bringing back these valuable commodities. They'd have to deal with the local militia and possible a group of wandering adventures. If the slaves are killed, they'd then have to plan an assault or infiltration to get more slaves so as not to lose face with the clan.

Skaven attacks on these innocents could provide good tension during the fight.

- The Skaven may attack several times over the course of the night. A probing attack by Gutter Runners and Giant Rats first, then a diversionary attack followed by the main effort. The diversionary attack may set part of the village on fire to cause confusion and draw defenders away from key areas.

You will not want to make every dice roll for every combat during the attack. Otherwise, you'll be resolving militiaman vs. Clanrat battles for too long and the tension of the fight will turn into tedium. Instead describe the course of the assault based on the soundness of the PCs' planning, the level of loyalty and courage they have instilled in the townsfolk, and the likely success of whatever tricks and defences they've planned. Try to create several dramatic incidents, such as fights in burning barns or the defence of women and children mentioned above. The PCs should feel that they, or perhaps their ability to organize and direct the townspeople, are all that stands between the Skaven and the enslavement of the Dotternbachers.

Alphonse, "the Big D"

The Big D is here to collect, and he brought his men with him. Alphonse will be accompanied by 2-5 thugs. Use the Footpad stats (see *WFRP*, page 234) for these goons.

Career: Crime Lord (ex-Smuggler, ex-Fence)
Race: Human

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
47%	37%	41%	50%	43%	46%	49%	56%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	14	4	5	5	0	7	0

Skills: Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (the Empire, Tilea), Dodge Blow, Drive, Evaluate +10%, Gossip +10%, Haggle +10%, Intimidate, Perception +10%, Row, Search, Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue), Secret Signs (Thief), Silent Move, Sleight of Hand, Speak (Reikspiel, Tilean), Swim, Torture

Talents: Dealmaker, Fleet Footed, Menacing, Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying), Streetwise, Strike to Stun, Super Numerate, Very Resilient
Armour: Light Armour (Full Leather Armour, Helmet)
Armour Points: Head 3, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1
Weapons: Best Craftsmanship Hand Weapon (Sword) and Sword-breaker
Trappings: Best craftsmanship clothing, Pouch with 100 *gc*, writing kit

Wrapping Up

Once the hunting party has been dealt with, *Slaves of Destiny* is at an end. If the PCs saved the village, the Dotternbachers will treat them as heroes and they'll always be treated kindly if they return. They also may have gained some useful allies like Kaspar Teuber. XP should be awarded to each PC as follows:

- 50 xp for finding the Slave Warren, defeating the slaves, and rescuing Hubert.
- 25 xp for each subplot resolved.
- 50 xp for dealing with the hunting party.
- 25 xp for successfully preparing Dotternbach for the assault.
- 5-30 xp for good roleplaying or particular heroic actions in the defence of Dotternbach.

The PCs' actions in Dotternbach could lead to further adventures. Here are some possibilities:

- If Friar Eckel was run out of town or shamed, he could come back to haunt the PCs. A few well-placed lies with powerful members of his order could land the PCs in all kinds of trouble.
- The man from Tilea, Alphonse, could become a recurring villain depending on how that subplot resolved. Things could get particularly interesting if they cut a deal with him to help defend the village.
- Durnhelm's brother Lanric may be alive but in adverse circumstances. He might be wounded, insane, or a prisoner. If the PCs hear word of him, they might remember Durnhelm and his troubles.
- The leader of the Skaven hunting party may escape and swear vengeance on the PCs. They could be dogged by assassins or worse.

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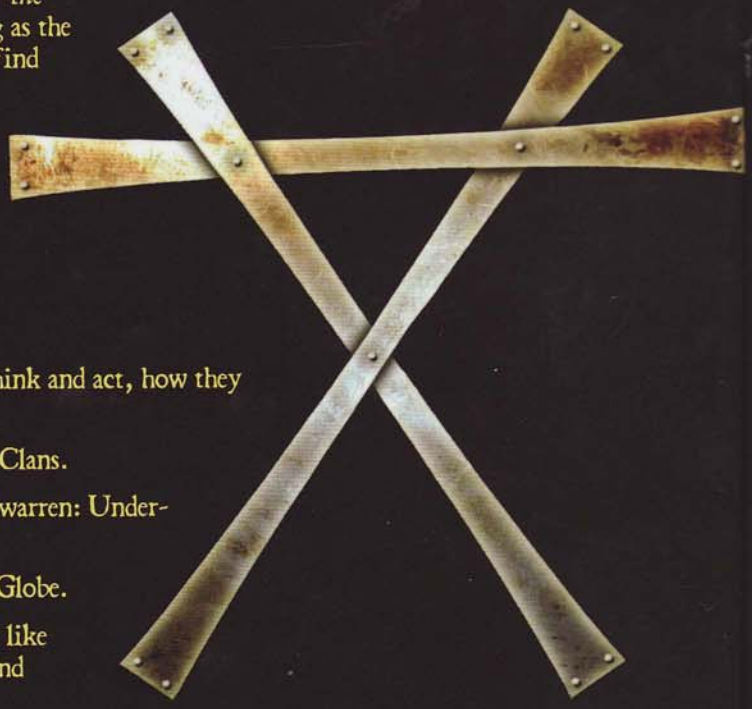
The Skaven Do Not Exist!

Or at least that's what the Empire wants you to believe. Often confused with Beastmen, the Skaven are no mindless horde of ravaging beasts, but rather a sinister force plotting the downfall of the Empire. Between the manufactured plagues, their Warpstone technology, and the mutated monstrosities that stalk the byways of the Under-Empire, the threat of a Skaven invasion has never been more real. *Children of the Horned Rat* reveals the secret world of the loathsome ratmen, serving as the essential guide to all things Skaven. Inside this exciting tome, you'll find everything you ever wanted to know and more, including:



- Extensive information on how the Skaven are perceived in the Empire and the rest of the Old World including myths and legends.
- A physiological overview of the Skaven, with detailed notes on the various breeds of the foul Ratmen.
- A detailed history of the Skaven and their exploits.
- Full disclosure on Skaven society, detailing how the Ratmen think and act, how they view each other and other races.
- An examination of the Great Clans and details on six Warlord Clans.
- Detailed descriptions of Skaven settlements including a sample warren: Under-Delberz.
- New Skaven weapons like the tail blade and the Poisoned Wind Globe.
- Extensive rules on Skaven Magic including a slew of new spells like *Crackling Doom* and *Skitterleap* as well as rules for creating and using Skaven technology.
- Guidelines for playing Skaven characters including over ten careers like the Grey Seer and Warlock Engineer.
- Several new monsters like the Bonechewer and Rat Mother.
- And an all new adventure by Chris Pramas!

The perfect accessory for any game set in the Old World, the *Children of the Horned Rat* exposes one of the gravest dangers the Empire faces. Don't believe the lies. The Skaven do exist and they will make slaves of us all!

The Ratmen Are Among Us!

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