

City of the Damned

Cartography by Nuala Kennedy
Scribed by Stephanus Harburgh



This is the first in a series of articles that hope to further explore the cursed city of Mordheim. This issue we set the scene for the City of the Damned with a wonderfully detailed map of Mordheim after the comet, courtesy of that skilled artiste Nuala Kennedy, with an accompanying history of the city before its demise. In subsequent issues we will focus on one of the four corners of the city (south-western/north-western/north-eastern & south-eastern). We'll detail each section's past history and indulge in the horrors it offers to warbands today with scenarios and new rules.

So, without further ado, welcome to the City of the Damned stranger...

Mordheim, City of the Damned, lair of the fell Shadowlord and dwelling place of all things evil, target of Sigmar's divine judgement... It was not always this way. For, once upon a time, before the holy comet that cleansed everything with wrathful fire, the city of Mordheim was a rich and prosperous place rivalling the great cities of the Empire: Marienburg, Nuln, Talabheim and even fair Altdorf.

Origins

Mordheim sits astride the great river Stir, downstream of the town of Waldenhof, as it flows from its headwaters in the titanic peaks of the Worlds Edge Mountains. The city of Mordheim was founded by the Knights of the Raven Order over a thousand years ago who won the land from the Goblins and named their stronghold Mordheim in memory of their fallen leader Count Gotthard Angelos. Although the settlement thrived upon its trade, which was principally fish and wool, the populace were still experienced warriors adept in the use of the spear, axe and bow. For centuries Mordheim was a bulwark against the ravages of the Orcs who would pour down in vast numbers from the mountains and other evil creatures that sought to invade the Empire from the east. Sigmar himself gifted the province of Ostermark to the ancestors of the noble Steinhardt house and they did much over the years to build and settle this untamed land.

Mordheim was one of the few cities of Ostermark to escape the destruction caused by the Waaagh of the mighty Orc warlord Gorbad Ironclaw in 1707. Every province of the Empire was required to send troops to fight the immense Orc invasion and many desperate battles were fought. The soldiery was raised from the fledgling river town to see off the greenskins of Waaagh Gorbad's right flank. Much of the army of Mordheim was destroyed in the Battle of Valen Field but Count Steinhardt survived and the city was saved as the Orc Waaagh turned west towards Averheim, which was not so fortunate.

Trade

As with most of the towns and cities of the Empire the many rivers and waterways are the lifeblood to trade. Massive barges and even ocean-going vessels can penetrate very deep into the Empire following the routes carved by the huge rivers. In days gone by Mordheim was a very busy maritime city, its quays bustling with river boats, barges and many smaller ships bringing timber and fleece from the eastern rural areas downstream and rare goods upstream from Altdorf. People would come from miles around to trade in the great markets and quaysides of the city and the merchant's guild brought many rare goods to the sparsely populated province of Ostermark. Being the only sizeable city in the east for many hundreds of miles meant that the merchants of Mordheim grew very rich and very fat. They built massive warehouses along the quaysides to store the goods that were being packed onto ships bound for Altdorf by sweating stevedores or unloaded from vessels coming in from the opposite direction. Besides from trade in textiles, timber and wool, the clear waters upstream of the River Stir provided fine fishing grounds and Mordheim had a large, bustling fish market.





Nordheim

By Nuala Kennedy



River Gate

Quayside

Great Library of Nordheim

Merchant's Quarter

Market Square

City Hall

Temple of Sigmar

Aprecht
Von Sodon
Amphitheater

The Pit

Wizard's
Mansions

East
Gatehouse

Poor Quarter

Clock Tower

South
Gatehouse

Black Pit
Settlement

Mordheim Uncovered

Situated close to the Worlds Edge Mountains also meant that Mordheim had a rich trade with the ancient and venerable Dwarfs. Indeed, since the Goblin wars, many Dwarfs had migrated from their troubled homeland and made Mordheim their home and provided services as excellent smiths and stonemasons. Many buildings in Mordheim reflected the influence of the Dwarfs in their sturdy design and much high quality metalwork was crafted by skilled Dwarf smiths for many long years.

Before the comet and the coming of the dark times so much wealth and prosperity was pouring into the city it seemed that Mordheim had a realistic claim to be the Empire's second city after Altdorf. Mordheim was a place of learning with its grand library and a place of the arts with glittering monuments and fine high-domed buildings.

Politics

Mordheim was the provincial capital of the state of Ostermark and the biggest, wealthiest city in the Empire's southern hemisphere second only to the city of Nuln. The province itself was ruled by the much honoured and noble Steinhardt family, the Count of which had his palace within the opulent rich quarter of the city. The Steinhardt line was descended from the proud Unberogens and had ruled in Ostermark since the time of Sigmar. Many times had the Counts of Steinhardt proved themselves in battle against the Empire's many enemies; they had slain countless Orcs and Goblins, cleared the lands of foul Beastmen and swiftly put down treacherous revolts and insurrections.

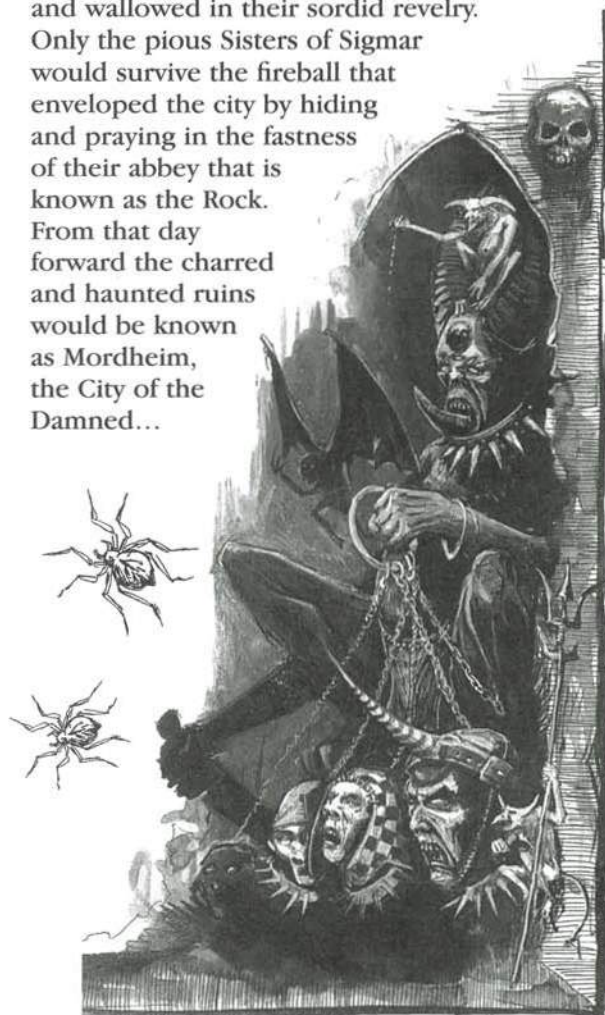
The province of Ostermark had always been sparsely populated for, it was a bleak land offering little in the ways of sustenance or wealth. Therefore the mainstay of political power lay within the robust walls of Mordheim. Here the noble families ruled over vast tracts of land and the stout, rural folk that lived and worked them. The nobility of Ostermark had always been detached from the simple peasantry, living aloof, opulent lives caring little for their feudal servants.

The year of madness

In 1979 the Empire was a land divided and without a leader for the Grand Theogonist of Sigmar did not recognise the Lady Magritta of Marienburg's claim to the throne of the Empire. The Elector Counts bickered and warred amongst themselves for years, making alliances then treacherously breaking them

again for what little gain that could be made. This was a dark time indeed for the Empire and Mordheim was to pay the ultimate price. The last Count Steinhardt locked himself away in his palace refusing to even attempt to alleviate the anarchy that was sweeping through the land. Count Amadeus Steinhardt held lavish parties at his palace for his fellow nobles whilst war and pestilence ravaged the land.

Mordheim prospered through the misery of the common folk; the merchants grew rich and fat selling their wares for inflated prices and the poor spiralled to new levels of poverty as they struggled to survive. Hedonism was rife amongst the decadent upper classes of the cursed city and many say that ancient, dark rituals were practised in many a noble house. Desperate to escape their bitter lives of drudgery the poor joined their twisted new masters in a vain hope of a brighter future. This was to be their undoing for such depraved acts of self-indulgence were to bring down the wrath of the gods upon them. In 1999 the Hammer of Sigmar struck the crowded city of Mordheim in the shape of a twin-tailed comet as the people made merry and wallowed in their sordid revelry. Only the pious Sisters of Sigmar would survive the fireball that enveloped the city by hiding and praying in the fastness of their abbey that is known as the Rock. From that day forward the charred and haunted ruins would be known as Mordheim, the City of the Damned...





City of the Damned

Cartography & new art by Nuala Kennedy
Scribed by Space McQuirk & Chris Blair

This is the second installment of the City of the Damned series of articles exploring the cursed city of Mordheim. This issue concentrates on the South-western Quarter of the city, specifically detailing the landmarks and their history. There is also a scenario which is specific to the area.

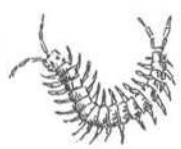


The Southwest Quarter of Mordheim was once the centre of religion, law and order. It was from this region that the official day to day business of governing the town took place. During the rule of Count Leopold Steinhardt, very little escaped the notice of the city guards and strict discipline was maintained. Unfortunately as the ruling elite became greedier, the funding vanished from this area. The rich nobles and merchants became increasingly removed from their people. They cared little for anything except who would be hosting the next lavish ball, and what flamboyant costumes they would wear. Without the money to mount constant patrols, law and order slowly began to break down.

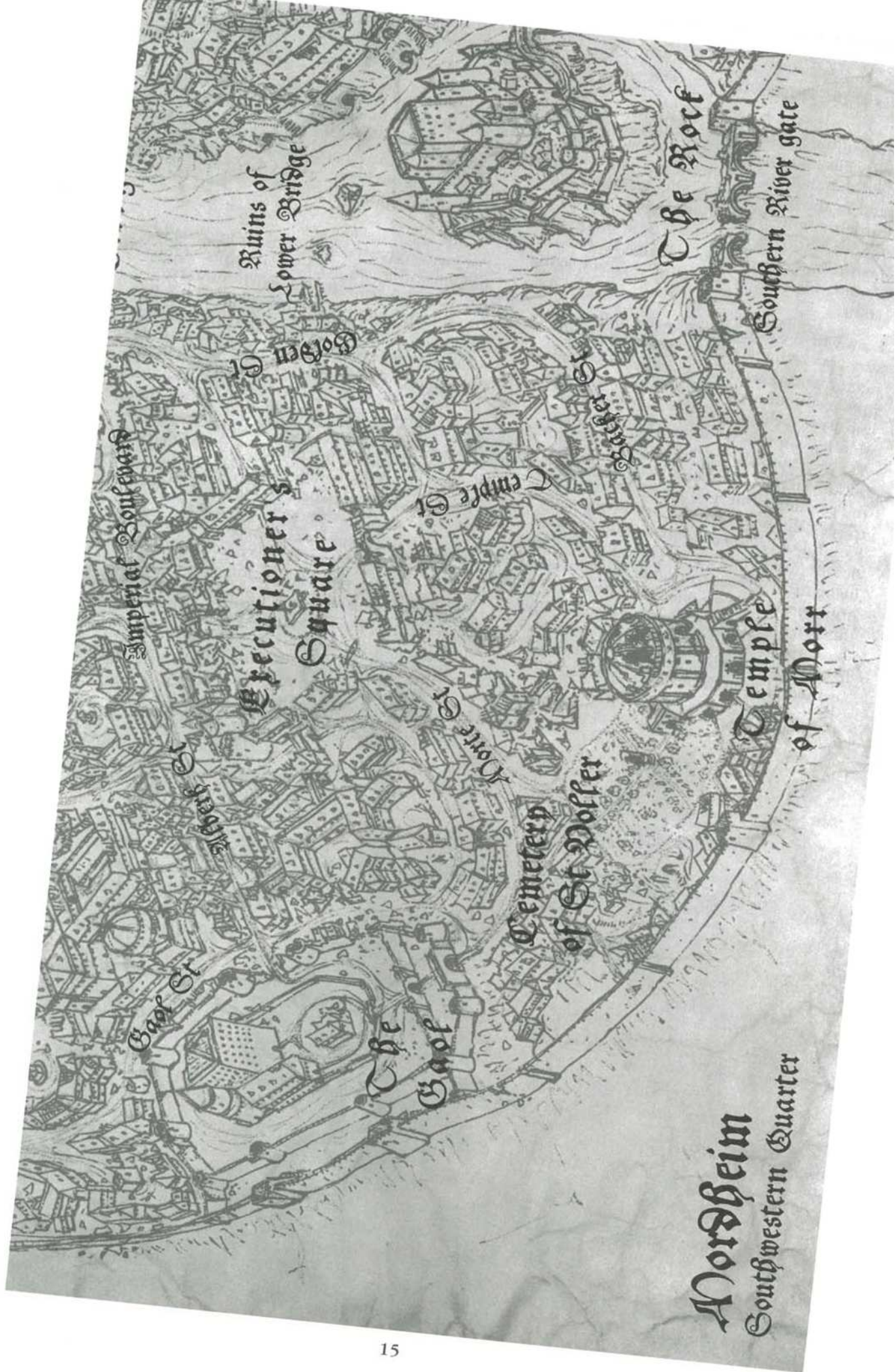


"Interested in visiting the Temple Quarter are you? There are a few things you might want to learn before you so eagerly head to your doom. When Mordheim was a thriving city they said only the dead and dying ever went there. Things haven't changed much since then. The problem is that the dead no longer rest easy in Mordheim. Round these parts of the city, brains are in high demand, they're a delicacy in fact. If you still insist on exploring this Quarter heed my words, you'd best not venture near the cemetery, for there's plenty of graves that still need filling."

Facing exorbitant taxes, the good people of Mordheim became increasingly desperate and crime began to escalate. By the time Leopold's son, Amadeus Steinhardt, had come to rule, the gaol was so full with petty criminals, there was no longer any room left within its walls. The town officials decided that drastic action had to be taken and so decreed that any crimes were punishable by death. This, for obvious reasons, led to an increase in executions. It is said that misery seeks sorrow for companionship, and the depraved citizens of Mordheim found pleasure in the suffering of others. They would flock in great numbers to watch the public executions. Spotting a unique opportunity to squeeze more money into their already overflowing coffers, the officials saw fit to charge for these macabre public displays. To keep the crowds interested and flocking to the square, they would devise increasingly gruesome ways in which to dispatch the criminals.



When the disaster struck, a record crowd had gathered in Executioner's Square to watch the execution of Gunther Griswald. This petty thief had been billed to be fed alive to stripper worms. Caught in the open few spectators survived the disaster. Most of the Quarter was completely devastated, but remarkably the Gaol escaped fairly intact.



Nordheim
Southwestern Quarter

City of the Damned

Many of the prisoners were left locked within their cells and for months their mad howls filled the night air, but hundreds more were freed by the blast. Vicious killers and insane murderers now roamed the lawless streets without fear of the city guard. It soon became clear from the manner of the attacks that an unknown leader was directing the rampaging bands.

Even worse was in store for the unfortunate survivors of the South-west Quarter. Evil necromancers who had escaped from the prison sought revenge on those who had imprisoned them, and the dead were in plentiful supply. At the height of the riots that were quickly spreading through the broken streets, the dead that had filled the cemetery emerged from their tombs to seek the warm embrace of living flesh. A handful of Priests of Morr stood in valiant defence, seeking to give last rights to the living dead who surrounded the ruins of their holy temple. They rallied the citizens to fight this evil and it was said that for three nights, fierce battle raged through the streets as the living fought off the dead. For a while it seemed as though the spirit of the people

would win the battle and the necromancers found that the hardened survivors of Mordheim were no easy prey. Then, just as the balance tipped in favour of the living, a dark shadow fell upon the town quarter.



For years a twisted and dark vampire had lain hidden within the cellars and vaults of the old Gaol. Ever fearful lest the witch hunters discover his lair, he and his coven of thralls had lived a pitiful existence, feeding off rats and stray animals. Now this ancient fiend emerged to exact his revenge on those who had sought to destroy him and his kind.



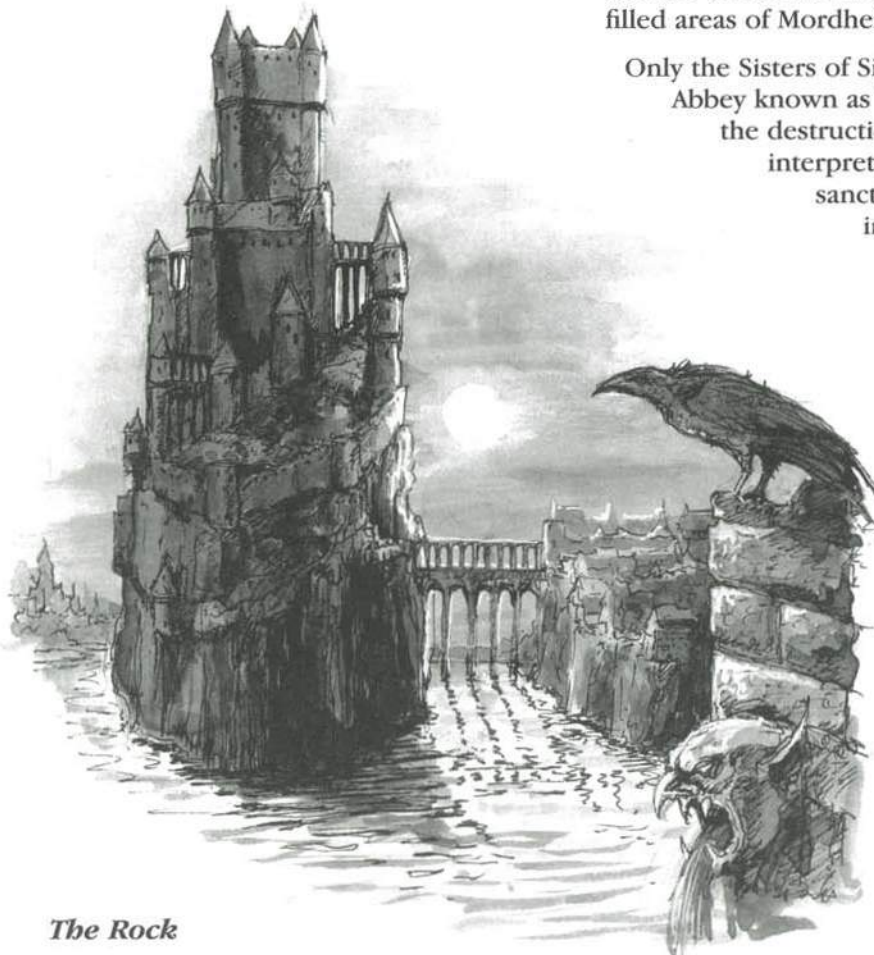
The dark Count and his minions, other lesser vampires he had cursed with his deadly kiss, descended to wreak carnage amongst the living. The comet had caused clouds of debris and dust to fill the skies and under this cover the vampires were protected from the sun.

Throughout the day and night the Count and his servants gorged themselves on the warm blood of the people of Mordheim. Those who survived the initial bloody onslaught fled in fear, and soon this once peaceful and civil quarter became one of the most horror filled areas of Mordheim.



Only the Sisters of Sigmar whose Fortress Abbey known as The Rock, had escaped the destruction in this quarter. They interpreted the saving of their sanctuary as divine

intervention. Hundreds flocked to the Sisters seeking protection within the walls but the Sisters stood firm, believing all of the inhabitants of Mordheim to be sinners who should be wiped from existence. They refused to aid the desperate gathering crowds. Even so, they knew the walking dead were an abomination to all that was holy



The Rock

"I told you to take a left at Alberk Strasse!" Freidrich shouted. He was beginning to regret joining the small group. In the smoky confines of the Red Dragon Inn it had seemed like a good idea at the time; adventure, wealth and fame all within his grasp. The reality on the streets of Mordheim was somewhat less appealing. The thick fog was cold and suffocating, although Freidrich could not tell whether his shivering was due to the temperature or cold stark fear.

"Where are we now then?" Herman, the self appointed leader of the group called back. Freidrich had spotted a broken street sign moments earlier and ran back to investigate. Picking up the sign from a pile of rubble he wiped off the thick layer of dirt.

"I think we're on Imperial Boulevard," he called out, cautiously walking back through the mists. There was no reply. Freidrich ran to catch up with the group. The last thing he wanted was to be wandering the streets lost, alone and without a map.

Tripping on a bulk beneath his feet, Freidrich picked himself up. He was horrified to see a body beneath him. Turning the bloody corpse over Freidrich was even more shocked to see Herman's lifeless eyes staring back at him. Blood flowed from a savage gash on his neck. Nervously glancing through the mist he could see the silhouettes of a dozen more bodies. Panic began to take hold and Freidrich sprinted away from the ghastly scene.

Freidrich had no idea how long he had been running. Each street looked familiar and yet there seemed no way out of this labyrinth. Dusk was already upon him, and Freidrich had no desire to be caught in this quarter after dark. He turned the corner of Golden Strasse, colliding with a tall cloaked figure.

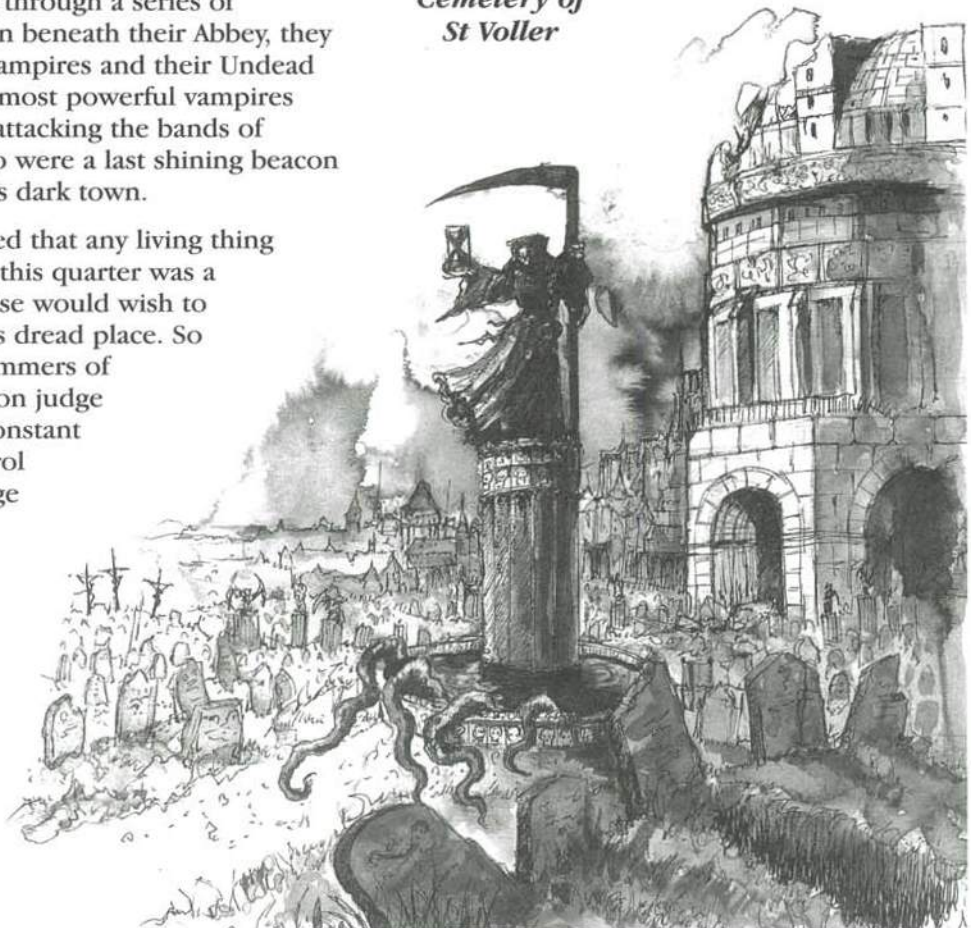
"Thank Sigmar." He stammered grasping at the stranger's lapels. "Sir, help me I'm lost." The stranger smiled revealing a menacing set of bloodied fangs.

"There is only one escape from my realm." The stranger replied, as his thick black cloak enveloped the doomed adventurer.

and could not ignore this threat to their beliefs. Venturing through a series of catacombs that ran beneath their Abbey, they fought back the vampires and their Undead hordes. Even the most powerful vampires thought twice of attacking the bands of Warrior Nuns who were a last shining beacon of light within this dark town.

The Sisters deemed that any living thing that dwelt within this quarter was a sinner, for who else would wish to remain within this dread place. So too would the hammers of Sigmar's retribution judge them. With this constant vigil they still patrol the quarter in large numbers. Constantly fighting off the vampires, necromancers and insane criminal minds that seek to take the quarter for their own devious ends.

*Cemetery of
St Voller*





Scenario: In the dead of the night...



Yuri joined Ludvik in crouching behind the low wall. He gazed over the top, into the misty graveyard beyond.

"Looks like he's on his own," whispered Yuri to his comrade "This should be plain sailing."

"Don't bank on it," responded Ludvik "You know how slippery the undying can get. We should be prepared for anything. There is no time to lose... let's go!"

Yuri signalled the rest of his warband as Ludvik prepared his crossbow. He heard the shuffling of feet as he crept to the cemetery gate – the boys would have to be stealthier than this if they were to surprise the being within. They would have to move quickly over a few hundred yards, and who knew what evils the dark creature could summon if given enough warning?

The mercenary glanced around as he slowly opened the gate. It squeaked a little, but there seemed to be no change in the

chanting from within the graveyard. The coast was clear. It was now or never.

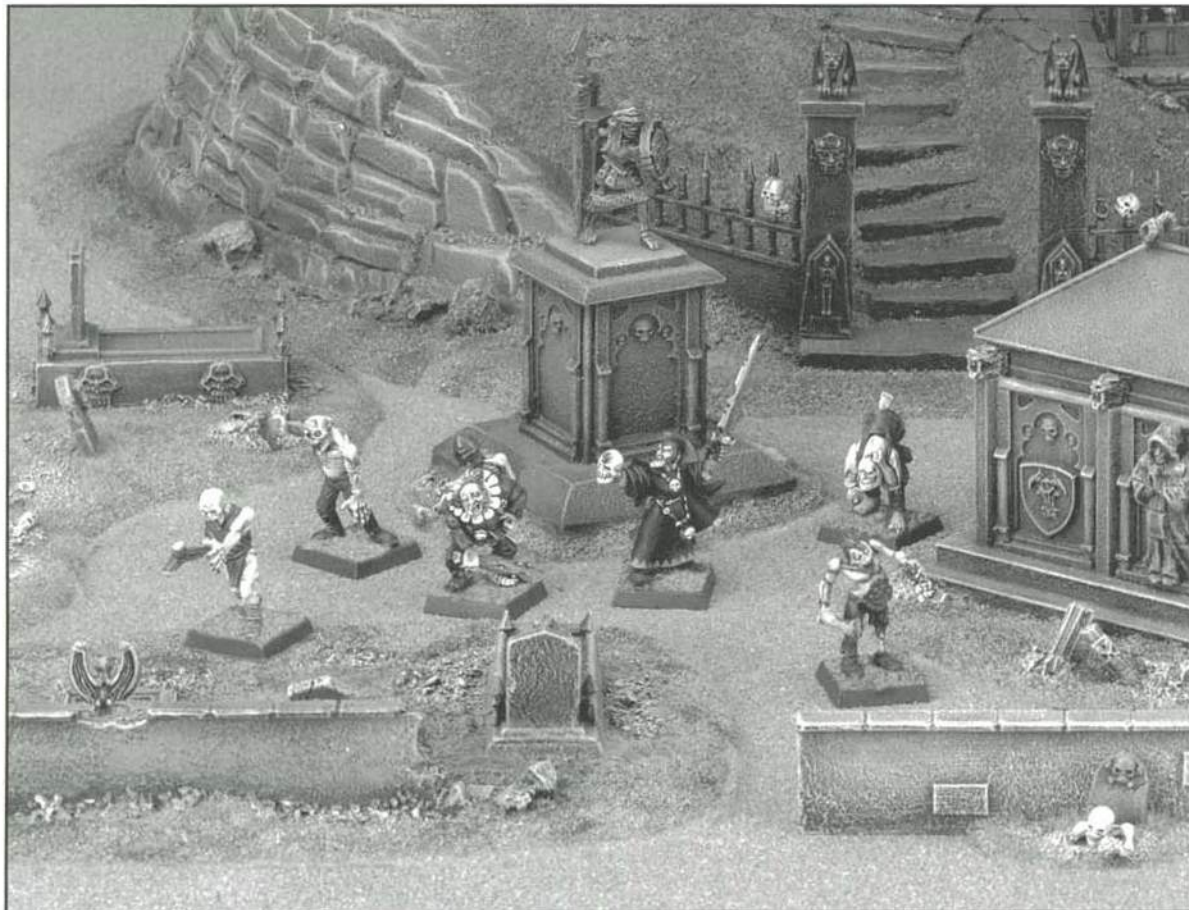


The men kept low as they ran past the first few graves. Yuri was intent on the figure before him – he could see it silhouetted against the moon, arms raised, chanting blasphemous words. He thought he saw something moving to his right, almost imperceptibly, and looked fleetingly in that direction. Nothing. Yuri took a hurried glance over his right shoulder to see Ludvik's expression; eyes open wide, mouth agape. He quickly turned to face the centre of the graveyard once more.

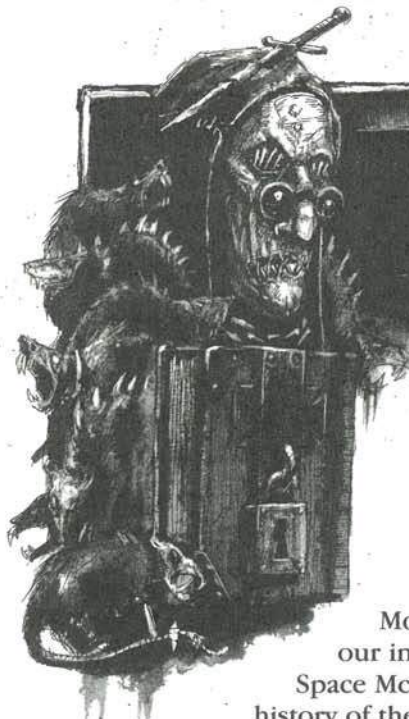
And found himself face to face with the hideous, bestial face of a ghoulish...



The warband has been approached at night by a mysterious figure offering good money for a simple assassination of an 'inexperienced petty wizard', preferably before he can complete a minor ritual. The



A Necromancer attempts to cast the ritual



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Cartography & new art by Nuala Kennedy
Scribed by Space McQuirk & Mark Havener

This is the third installment of the City of the Damned series of articles exploring the cursed city of Mordheim. This issue our intrepid scribe, Space McQuirk explores the history of the opulent palaces and exotic gardens of the once noble north-west quarter.

In the decades before the infamous comet struck Mordheim, the city had prospered to the extent that of all the cities in the Empire it was second in wealth and influence only to capital of Altdorf. The nobles had grown rich on the toils of the farmers and workers, and the Rich Quarter of Mordheim was renown for being the most extravagant region in the entire realm. Such was the extent of the city's wealth the palace courtyard of its ruler, the extravagant Count Steinhardt, was quite literally paved with gold. In 1979, the Empire was deeply embroiled in a bitter civil war. The Grand Theogonist refused to acknowledge Lady Magritta's claim to the throne and the land rapidly descended into anarchy and war. During this turmoil, Count Steinhardt refused to commit his forces to any of the three warring factions. He realised that by remaining neutral he would be able to make a veritable fortune in bribes and gifts, but

more importantly he didn't want to see the bright clean livery of the soldiers of Mordheim sullied with the mud and bloody stains of battle. As the Empire went to war, expending valuable resources on arms and soldiers Mordheim grew rich selling arms and supplies at extortionate prices to any side.

The Count used the wealth that was generated from the lands to sell valuable resources such as food, ores and wood to whatever faction bid the highest. In his treasury, the coffers overflowed with the gold of the warring Elector Counts and soon the Count had acquired more wealth than any single individual in the entire land. The Count was an extremely vain man and relished being the centre of attention. With more money than he could ever possibly spend Count Steinhardt used his newly found wealth to fund extraordinary lavish parties. He would buy extravagant gifts and bestow them upon his guests. Once he gifted one of his many mistresses with a beautiful diamond ring. Upon seeing the ring she complained that she had nothing to wear with it, so the Count had a dress made from rare Cathayan silk and heavily embroidered with gold twine that would bankrupt most Elector Counts.

Hundreds would attend the masquerade balls and fill themselves on the sumptuous banquets where the



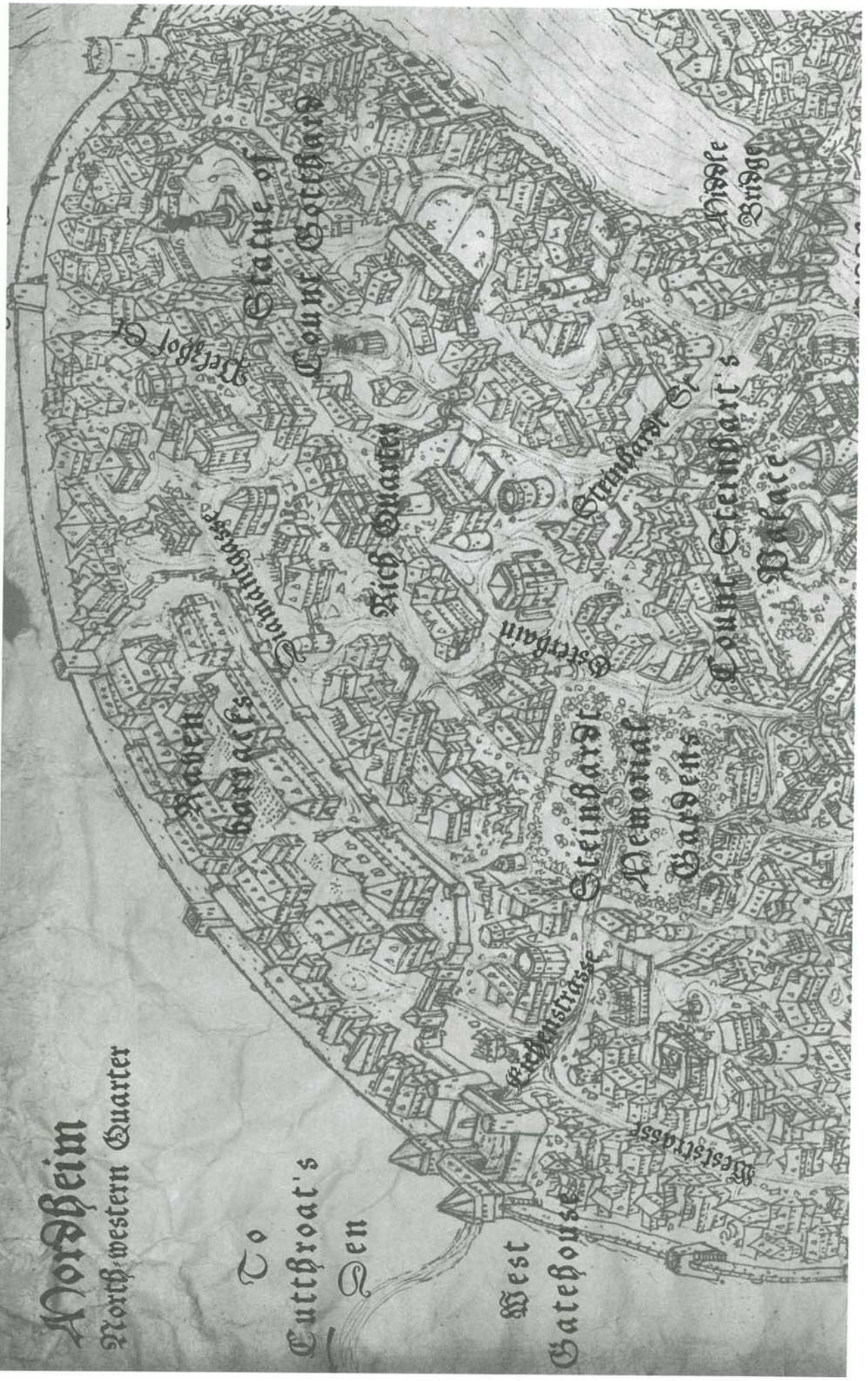
"Back for more, eh? Cemeteries and walking corpses not scary enough for you boy? Well, you've explored the Temple Quarter are you prepared for the Rich Quarter? There's more than just a few Zombies here, I can tell you. Once this place shone like a gemstone, rich and opulent. Once it was the seat of Mordheim's power of old for here was where the Count held court. Some say that Count Steinhardt, or whatever has become of him, still holds court in this black place. So, be careful boy, or be dead."

Nordheim

North western Quarter

To
Cutthroat's
Den

West
Gatehouse



St. Jago
St. Jago
St. Jago

Count's Garden

Rich Quarter

Esterhart's

Steindorff

Demons

Garden

Count Esterhart's

Palace

Middle
Bridge

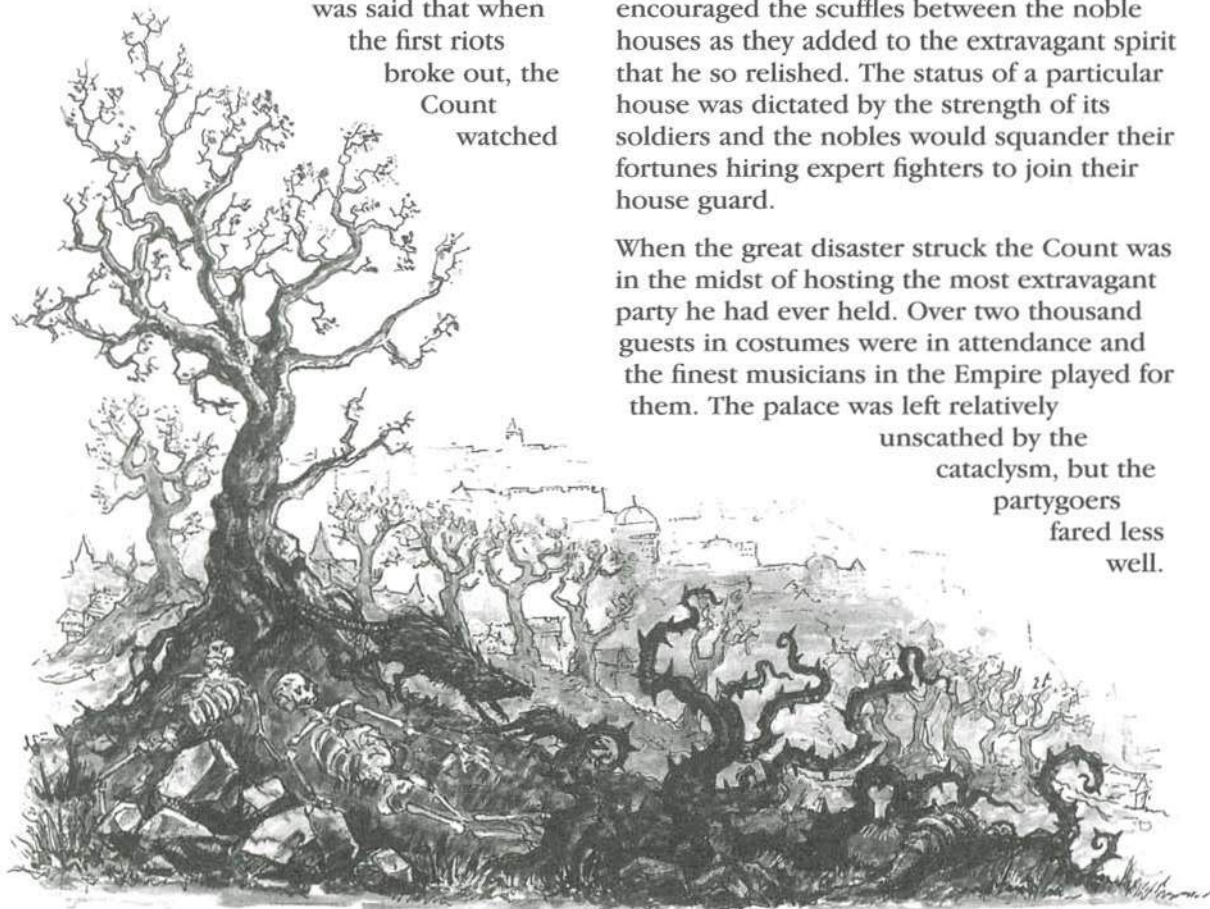
City of the Damned

Count would serve such delicacies as roast eagles and rump of griffon. It is even rumoured that the Count was responsible for the extinction of the lesser fire Drake after he acquired a taste for their spicy eggs.



During this time the poor suffered miserably. The Count and his nobles would sell their best produce to the warring factions, leaving only the rotten scraps for his commoners to fight over. The town's guard became increasingly corrupt and law and order was soon all but forgotten. The Count, locked behind the walls of his elegant palace had little concern for the affairs of state. The Count ordered his men remove the statue of Count Gotthard, the founder of Mordheim and a hero to the people, and have it replaced with an image of himself. This self-indulgent vanity was finally too much for the downtrodden citizens, who took arms and finally rebelled. They attacked the guards of the Raven Barracks and the West Gatehouse where the city guards sat drunk, playing dice. The guards were so complacent that they had not even set up a watch. Quickly over coming the surprised defenders of the North-west Quarter, the angry mob rampaged through the streets of Mordheim. It

was said that when
the first riots
broke out, the
Count
watched



Memorial Gardens

from his balcony and thought it was splendid entertainment. Over a short period of time anarchy descended upon Mordheim, but the rich merchants and nobles of the North-west Quarter had hired many mercenaries, paying for the upkeep of elite household guards. The ruthless approach used by the soldiers in dealing with the rioters quickly calmed the situation and order was restored. These small bands of heavily armed warriors were no better than vigilantes and hired thugs, who patrolled the streets ensuring that the fine alleys and streets of the North-west Quarter remained free from the filth and squalor that infested the rest of the city. Now the area was ruled with a tight fist. Anyone deemed to be a vagrant was humiliated in the stocks before being put onto a barge and removed from the city.

With the riots quashed there was little real work to keep the household guards occupied and they quickly grew bored.



Often these soldiers would seek entertainment by fighting the guards of other another noble's house in pre-arranged duels. The Count officially banned such activity, but in reality encouraged the scuffles between the noble houses as they added to the extravagant spirit that he so relished. The status of a particular house was dictated by the strength of its soldiers and the nobles would squander their fortunes hiring expert fighters to join their house guard.

When the great disaster struck the Count was in the midst of hosting the most extravagant party he had ever held. Over two thousand guests in costumes were in attendance and the finest musicians in the Empire played for them. The palace was left relatively

unscathed by the
cataclysm, but the
partygoers
fared less
well.

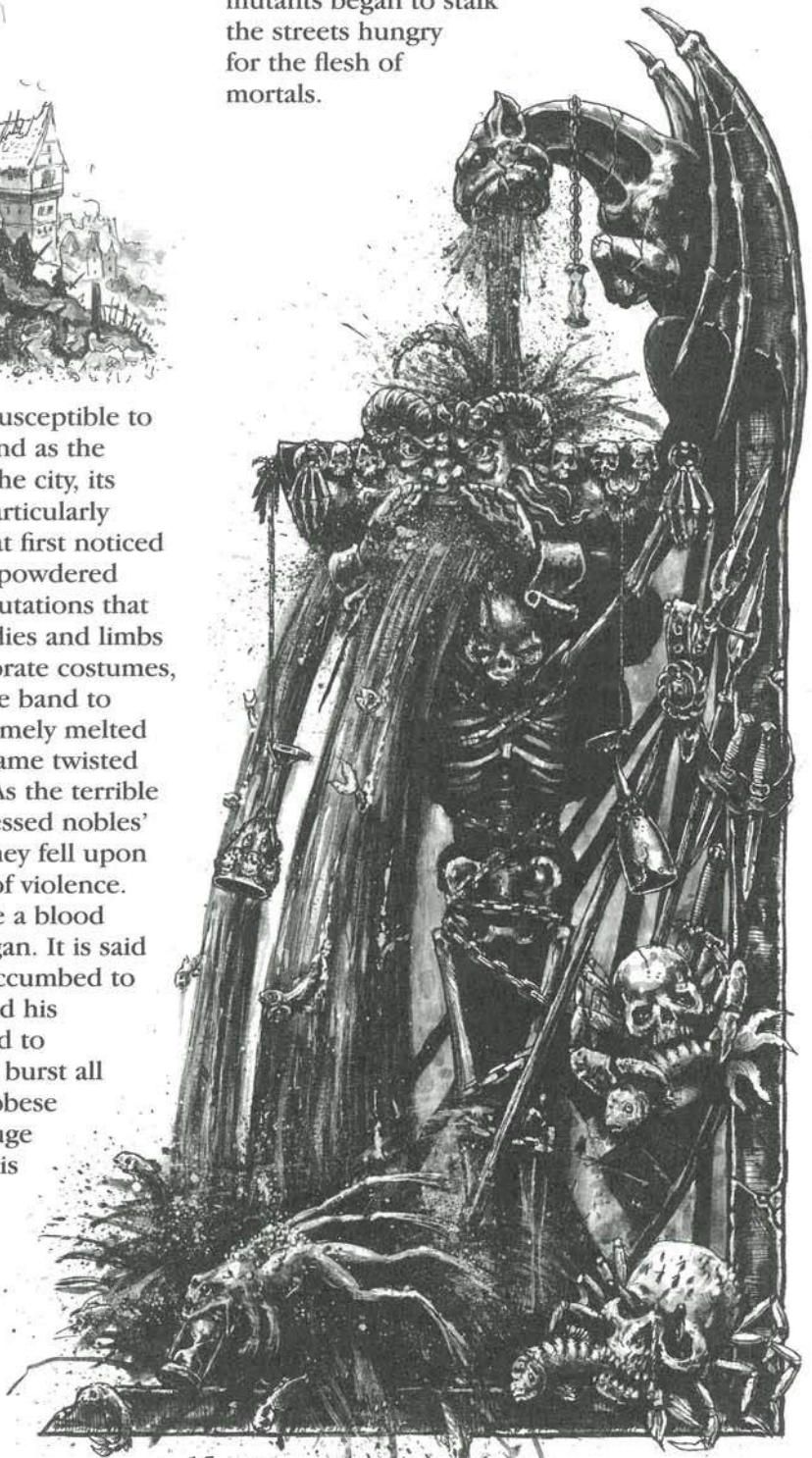
*Statue of
Count
Gottbard*



Their minds were particularly susceptible to the mutating effects of Chaos and as the wyrdstone rained down upon the city, its nobility was picked out for a particularly chilling fate. It is said that few at first noticed the changes that overcame the powdered fops. Most thought the gross mutations that sprouted from each other's bodies and limbs were simply parts of their elaborate costumes, and even the Count ordered the band to continue playing. Masks gruesomely melted into the wearer's faces and became twisted images of hatred and menace. As the terrible power of Chaos filled the possessed nobles' minds with horrifying visions they fell upon those around them in an orgy of violence. The luxurious ballroom became a blood bath as wholesale slaughter began. It is said that the Count himself soon succumbed to the warping effects of Chaos and his already sumptuous belly swelled to enormous size. Poxes and boils burst all over him, and he was soon so obese that he was unable to move. Huge tendrils sprouted where once his arms had been and these writhing limbs reached out, grasping at the screaming guests. He then dragged them towards him and consumed them whole.



As the small bright green, glowing shards continued to rain down from the dust and debris filled skies all over the North-west Quarter, the wyrdstone began to have other strange and deadly mutating effects. A great many of the greedy inhabitants thought these stones were precious gems and began to hoard wyrdstone in vast quantities. And so the great design of the dreaded Shadowlord came to fruition. The taint of Chaos issued from the wyrdstone was at its purest and those who hoarded the shards soon went the way of the Count's guests. Horrible mutants began to stalk the streets hungry for the flesh of mortals.



City of the Damned

Even stranger were the effects that the Wyrdstone had on the Count's famous Memorial Gardens. In an extravagant display of how to squander a fortune, the Count imported all manner of strange plants from far away lands such as mythical Lustria and had the most fabulous gardens seen anywhere in the Empire. Many lovers would gather in the central park of the exotic gardens to welcome in the New Year amongst its beautiful surroundings. As shards of wyrdstone fell like hailstones from the sky, the plants soon developed a malevolent life of their own and roots and vines grasped at the poor couples ensnaring them tightly before dragging them

deep down into the soil where the roots drank deeply from their blood. Other plants spat out poisonous barbs at any unfortunates who strayed too near. The water in the fountain at the centre of the gardens glowed bright green and tales tell of the cherubs howling terrible curses of doom and despair. The Great Oak that once stood near the ornate gates of the garden uprooted itself and began a rampage of death and destruction. A huge one hundred foot tall monster, it smashed through the perimeter wall of the gardens and began to make its way to the West Gatehouse where crowds had gathered in a desperate attempt to flee the disaster.

Jacob peered through the arched gateway that was the entrance to the Memorial Gardens. The black iron railings that surrounded the park were bent and twisted, and mounted on the spikes that ran around the top were the severed heads and skulls of unfortunate victims. He shuddered for a moment at the thought of what horrors lay in wait and whether or not his own head would soon be on gruesome display.

The ornate gate creaked as a gust of wind blew it open, swinging back it clanged loudly in the silence. Jacob took a deep breath; he had heard many tales of what lay in wait within the gardens and none of them talked of the beautiful serenity that he associated with city parks.

"Afraid of plants are you, Jacob?" a deep husky voice called out from behind him. Jacob recognised it as Herman Deidrichbaun's. He was a particularly uncouth individual whose only merit was the fact he was a strong and capable fighter.

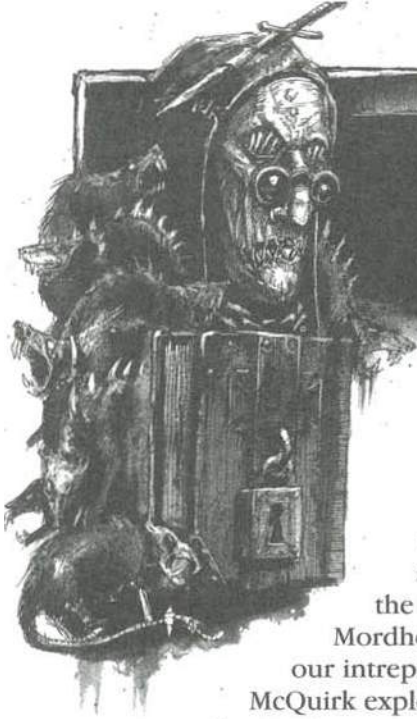
"If you're in such a hurry, then please don't wait for me." Jacob called out. Herman was quiet, the man might be strong but he was no fool. Jacob had drawn the short straw and now he had to summon up enough courage to do his duty. Cursing to himself he cautiously stepped through the gateway. He waited anxiously for a moment, expecting something to leap out at him from the shadows. His heart pounded heavily as he stared around the gardens. The overgrown grass waved in the wind, but apart from a few thorny, macabre looking bushes, there seemed little out of the ordinary that was life threatening. Jacob narrowed his eyes and peered towards the distant space. In the darkness he could just make out the old ornate fountain, now covered in moss and vines. All around the park he could spot the telltale glow of wyrdstone shards. There was a fortune here just waiting to be collected.

Herman laughed "Sec, there is nothing to fear, I told you." He barged past Jacob and ran to a large pile of the precious stone. Shoving large chunks of the stuff into his pockets Herman turned to face Jacob and the others who had now gathered in the garden. A gormless grin spread across his face.

"When I was youth I was thrown out from this park for playing on the grass, now look at me." As if in protest at the ignominy of his childhood Herman jumped up and down trampling the weeds beneath his hulking weight. The small group laughed at the huge man's antics.

Jacob suddenly froze, horrified as he watched a long tendril shoot suddenly from the ground. It snaked its way quickly up from the soil and wound itself round Herman's leg. A second followed and more and more tendrils rose up from the ground. Herman was soon enveloped in a mass of writhing green roots; they grasped onto the huge warrior who had turned a bright shade of red as they crushed the breath from him. In less than a minute Herman had been wrestled down into the earth.

Jacob turned to run but the gate had disappeared in a mass of vines. The green shoots reached out towards the small group, a couple of whom tried to hack their way through the foliage in vain. All around the warband, tendrils now reached out to grasp their victims, lifting them from the ground. A dark shadow passed overhead and Jacob looked up to see the branches of a tree reaching down towards him. He was helpless to prevent the incredibly strong creepers curling round his waist as the monstrous plant hoisted him from the ground and dragged him to his doom. Thick sap covered him, burning his skin, pain and dizziness overcame him. The last thing Jacob saw before losing consciousness was Herman's hand clawing at the soil before disappearing beneath the earth.



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Scribed by Space McQuirk & Nick Jakos

This is the fourth installment of the City of the Damned series of articles exploring the cursed city of Mordheim. This issue our intrepid scribe, Space McQuirk explores the history of the quarter renowned for trade and learning: the North-east Quarter.

Once, when Mordheim was a living city, the crowded labyrinth of streets and market plazas to the north-east was the Merchants – Quarter, more commonly known as the District of the Flying Horse. A bustling and vibrant location, thousands of people from all across the province would fill the streets day and night. It was said that this part of the city never slept, and many of the market stalls would remain open long into the early hours. The lively district laid claim to having more taverns within an area encompassing a few square miles than any other city in the Old World, and for the most part even the seediest of these dens of iniquity were rarely empty. The streets in this quarter were often bright with colour and festivity and the locals were renowned for their vivacious hospitality.

Many scholars now believe that the true heart of power in Mordheim lay with the wealthy Merchant families. Although officially, the

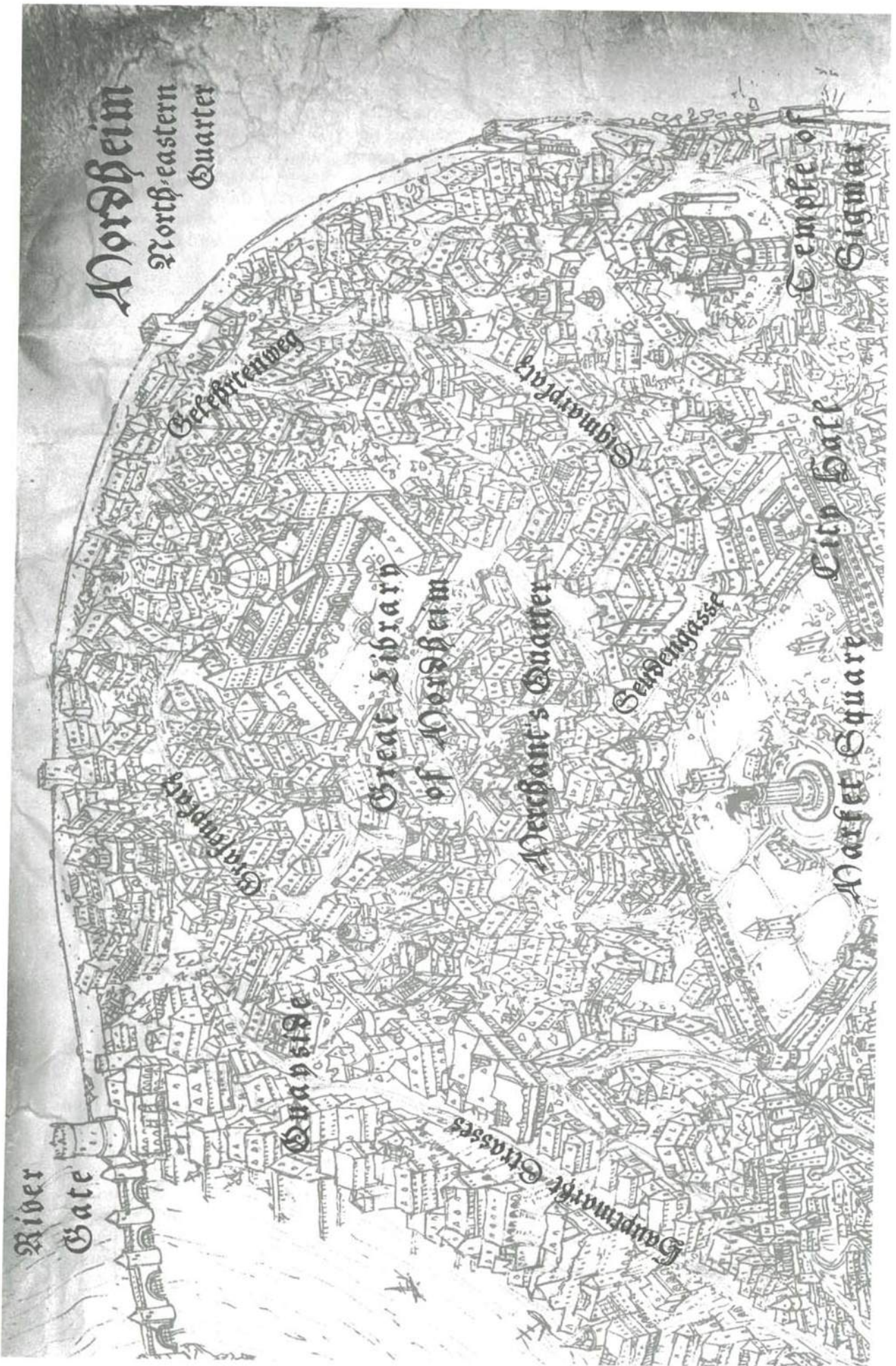
Count ruled the city and the surrounding province, neither he nor his official representatives took much interest in government. Mordheim's aristocracy were far too insular and hedonistic and left the day-to-day running of the city's commerce to the dozens of guilds that operated within the District of the Flying Horse and the High Justices that they elected. These guilds held an iron tight grip of power and made it their business to know the everyday affairs – the affairs of the people that inhabited the city. So long as the Count received his lucrative tithes on all business transactions he allowed the guilds to pursue trade and indeed run the city as they saw fit.

Mordheim's position on the River Stir made it an ideal location for trading. It was through trade that the town began to flourish and grow. Huge barges, laden with goods from Altdorf, Marienburg and across the wide oceans would make their way down the river to unload their wares in the opulent city. The quayside soon became a thriving community. The city's ideal central location in the east made it easy for traders from distant lands to flock to the city to exchange and barter in the name of profit.

Mordheim became known as the finest market city in the Empire, rivalling even the busiest ports such as Marienburg. There were many traders who would claim that for the right price they could locate any object you so



"You've survived your excursions into the Temple Quarter and the Rich Quarter have you boy? Are you sure that you're quite prepared for the horrors of the old Merchants' Quarter? Once the cosmopolitan centre of old Mordheim, a place of bustling markets and busy quaysides. It was said that there was nothing you couldn't buy in Mordheim for the right price. Now it seems that the price of exploring the ruins of the North-eastern Quarter is death or worse at the claws of fouler things than the tax collectors of old..."



Nordheim
North-eastern
Quarter

River
Gate

Gefestrenweg

Grafmuntz

Gaufmuntz

Great Library
of Nordheim

Merchant's Quarter

Gaufmuntz
Gtasses

Gardengasse

Sigmundstr

Temple of
Sigmar

City Hall

Market Square

desired within a single day. The market place was truly an experience beyond the dreams of most mortals. All manner of strange and exotic goods from the far-flung corners of the world were displayed for sale. From the rare eastern silks and spices, to exquisite metals and gems mined in the Worlds Edge Mountains; every stall was a wonder to behold. Wealthy landowners and merchants from far a field came to stare in wonderment at the fantastic items laid on the stalls. The market sellers soon found that exotic beasts were a particular favourite amongst the wealthy clients, and hunters and trappers from across the Old World would bring strange creatures to sell to the wealthy at exorbitant prices. It is because of this that the Merchants Quarter got its name – the District of the Flying Horse. A wealthy Bretonnian trader came to Mordheim late in the year 1818 bringing with him a herd of grey Pegasi and the Guildmasters were so impressed with the beasts that they named the Merchants Quarter after them.

A seedy underhive of society is often known to rear its ugly head when there is a profit to be found, and the avarice and corruption within Mordheim was particularly rife. In

return for small donations, the leaders of the street gangs made deals granting individual market traders personal protection and exclusive rights to sell their wares. Those who refused to pay would find their stalls besotted by thieves and pick pockets, and if this was not enough to persuade them, as they finished trading they would be set upon and robbed or, even worse, murdered.

The racketeers realised the money making potential and soon united to work together.



One night, in a dark cellar the heads of the gangs met together and agreed that if they were to cease their petty squabbles and join forces, the profit potential would be astounding. This in turn led to the formation of the Trade Guilds. The gang leaders agreed to share power. In a bold move, the gangs united and set out to regulate and protect the supply of goods in and out of the city. Facing such a large and unruly force the poorly paid, unmotivated city guard were easily bribed into working for them. They soon cajoled, murdered or bought their way into all of the existing Merchants guilds. Within weeks, the new heads of these guilds found themselves in positions of great power and wealth.

Individual guilds such as the House of Merchants, the Thieves Guild and the Smiths Guild became very powerful and had much influence on the day-to-day affairs in Mordheim. Numerous other guilds sprang into power and soon it seemed that every tradesman or artisan in the city had to belong to a guild in order to make a living. Those who refused to join a guild, soon found themselves unable to find any work and more often than not would be thrown out from the city or incarcerated for petty offenses. Even worse, these offenders would mysteriously vanish, never to be heard from again.

By the time of the great disaster, the Guildmasters ruled the entire region, in the name of Count Steinhardt, of course... Through networks of spies and employees, the guilds had absolute knowledge of all that took place in Mordheim. It is no coincidence that the City Hall was located next to the Market Place. It was in this magnificent structure that the heads of the guilds and the Chief Justices gathered. Such was the extent of their power that petty criminals would have to apply for a license before they even attempt to pick a pocket.

The guild placed heavy taxes on all goods that came into Mordheim and took percentages of



Quayside

the profits of any sale. To do this they needed to keep a careful watch on what provisions entered the city. It was through the design of the guilds that the city wall was constructed. Not to keep out intruders, but instead to regulate the supply of trade.

Each of the four gates was manned by soldiers, who were under strict orders from the corrupt officials to closely inspect all wares coming into and out from the city. At the mouth of the River Stir, a great gateway was built to prevent the ships and barges from entering or leaving the city without prior inspection. Any who sought to fight against their corruption and power would find themselves placed in positions of great danger. The Assassins guild was particularly favoured when it came to dealing with such individuals.

Another notable aspect of the North-eastern Quarter was the Great Library. When the first Count of Mordheim had established the town he had declared that he wanted the people to be 'learn'ed and wise'. He had ordered the construction of a library and vowed that it would be the largest of its kind. In time, a competition began to develop with that of the Great Library of Altdorf. Successive rulers of the town would add wings or even whole floors to the library only to find that the Emperor would design an even grander structure to add to the library in the capital city of Altdorf.

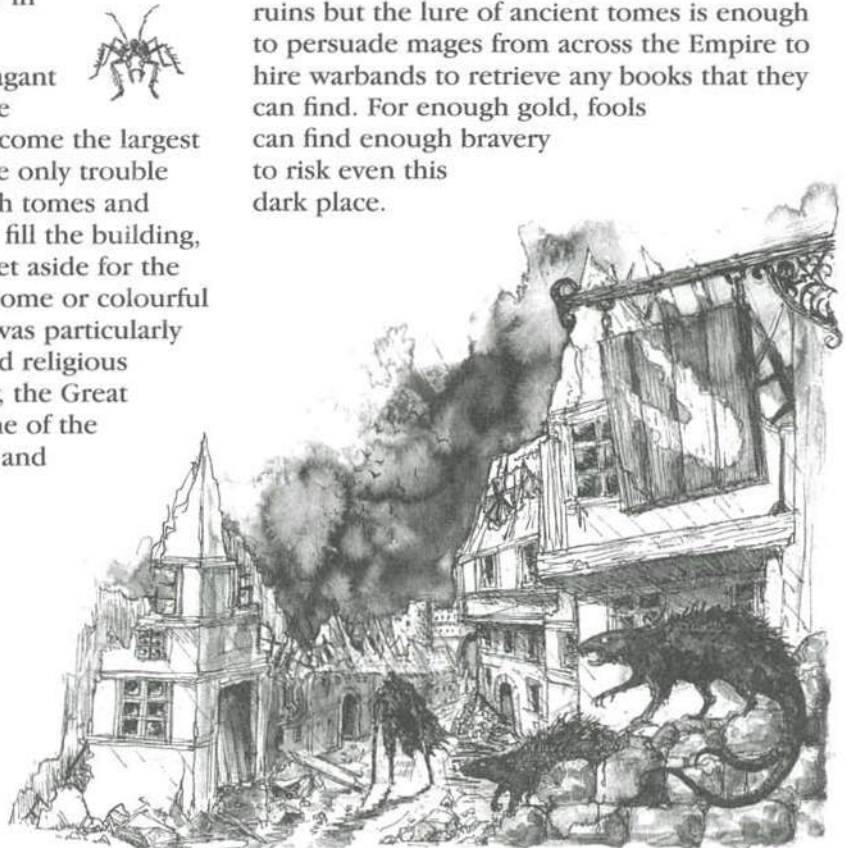
During the rule of the extravagant Count Ignatius Steinhardt, the library grew extensively to become the largest building in the entire city. The only trouble was that there weren't enough tomes and manuscripts in the Empire to fill the building, so often an entire wing was set aside for the single task of housing a rare tome or colourful book that took his fancy. He was particularly fond of collecting mystical and religious tomes. Of course, unwittingly, the Great Library managed to collect one of the largest deposits of Daemonic and Necromantic lore in the Empire.

The great disaster struck very close to the North-eastern Quarter and as a result the entire area was devastated. In one instant, centuries of sweat and hard toil spent constructing the Great Library, were wiped out as

the cataclysm hit. A great inferno engulfed the ruins of the building and the hundreds of thousands of priceless tomes went up in flames. Soon the fire raged out of control across the entire quarter. Dazed, confused and terrified by the impact of the comet, the disoriented survivors found themselves trapped in a fiery maelstrom. Akin to a verse from the Cantos of Macadamnus, the death and destruction caused in the wake of the comet released the daemons and malevolent spirits bound within the dark tomes that burned in the fiery, Wyrdstone flames. There were few that survived the flames and cavorting daemons of the North-eastern Quarter. Only at the point of the comet's impact, where now lies the Pit, was the destruction more complete.



Now the quarter is a diabolical mockery of all that it once was. The empty, shattered streets are filled with the burnt husks of once splendid buildings. The supernatural fires that engulfed the area still burn in many places, and at night the whole area glows with a macabre orange hue. The ruins of the Great Library dominate the charred landscape like the blackened skeleton of some gargantuan beast. As the fire gutted the centre of learning, many arcane forces were released around the building and now all manner of foul daemons dwell within the ruined walls. Only the bravest ever consider going anywhere near the ruins but the lure of ancient tomes is enough to persuade mages from across the Empire to hire warbands to retrieve any books that they can find. For enough gold, fools can find enough bravery to risk even this dark place.



It is perhaps a testament to the strength of the guilds or the avarice of Man that they still retain a certain degree of control over the city and the surrounding settlements. Few know from where the guilds operate, but still they still maintain a stranglehold on power in the region. Now the guilds have a much more powerful resource to control – Wyrdstone. Many believe, and without much evidence to the contrary, that the remains of the guilds are infested by or controlled by the Cult of the Possessed.

As each of the guilds fought for power, another more sinister threat crept unseen into the city. The city had once supported a number of rat catchers and tunnel fighters to keep the threat of vermin at bay. With this now gone, the mutated rat-men called Skaven emerged. For many years these creatures had scratched a living, feeding off the decay and squalor of the opulent city, too afraid to show them lest they invite swift death. Now they have poured from their lairs to seize power. The first massive wave of rat-men was reported to have swarmed out from the sewers around the quayside region. The infestation quickly spread across the quarter into the surrounding streets.

For many days the Skaven fought against and enslaved the pitiless remnants of Mordheim's population. As the weeks wore on however, the survivors were irreversibly changed through their contact with the Wyrdstone that infested the city. Soon enough the easy prey that were being harvested by the Skaven had become fearsome beasts, horribly mutated. Eventually, the teeming hordes of plague ridden Skaven were pushed back to the quayside by a multitude of ravenous mutants, but here their numbers were far too great for them to be completely driven out of Mordheim.

Now the quarter remains in an uneasy stalemate. The Skaven have consolidated their control of the quayside. It is here that they are most powerful and only the foolish would ever seek to venture near this region. Although occasionally the odd river pirate ship seeks quiet refuge at Mordheim's deserted quayside, for many an illicit transaction can occur at a port with no officials – none can say who controls the teeming hordes of vermin. Whatever the case may be, the rat-men are growing in number and there are many who fear it is but a matter

of time before they burst forth in such numbers that they will over run the entire ruins. Even now they have the ability to hide within the encampments and taverns, their twisted features hidden beneath cowls and robes. There is little that their spies do not uncover and report back to their masters and these vile creatures are without doubt the greatest threat to humanity that the city has ever faced.

Even in the face of this menace that skulks in the shadows, the guilds still continue to fight each other. Such is the nature of their greed and avarice that they still seek to gain control and seize ultimate power. Possibly it is the warping effects of the Wyrdstone that play on their weak minds but the guild leaders will more than happily break temporary alliances if they have anything to gain in doing so.

The once thriving Market Square has become a deserted plaza. Only the exceptionally brave or downright foolhardy dare cross the open cobbles, where once thousands of merchants sold their wares. To venture into Market Square is to expose oneself to all those who keep a close watch from the surrounding shadows. Many eyes peer from the dark alleys and ruined buildings, in search of a fresh opportunity to make a quick killing. There is still a vast quantity of precious and exotic goods lying in the broken cellars of merchant's houses for the taking.

It is said that a few of the Pegasi escaped the destruction and their cages and have made their lairs around this area. Some have mutated horribly and are twisted diabolic parodies of their former selves. The most infamous of these creatures is said to be a huge black Pegasus with several additional horribly mutated heads, that of a serpent and a ram. Hunger gnaws at the stomachs of these beasts and they will face many times their number if they catch the scent of prey.

In a terrible twist of fate, the Merchants Quarter still remains the most opulent region of the accursed city. Should any adventurous soul wish to visit the ruined library or take a chance and stroll through the market place, it is highly likely that they may discover some rare goods that have survived the fall. Leaving the quarter with your life is a different matter though, for the District of the Flying Horse is also rich pickings for those who seek to spill blood.

