

CONQUEST

OF THE STORNLANDS



AUTICUS DAERK

A dark, atmospheric scene with a figure in a boat on a river, surrounded by chains and a glowing green light. The text is overlaid on this scene.

THE WEAVERS OF FATE
SPUN A FAR TALE
UPON A STONE LAND
LONG FORGOTTEN
BEARS THE SOUL
OF THE WORLD

Dedication and Credits

This work is dedicated to the Conquest gaming community. To many years of adventures in the world of Ea as we discover this brave new world... and to the developers and artists and loremasters at Para Bellum Wargames, who allow their fan base to create content for their world.

Thank you for letting me tell the tale of a king without a throne, and a land cursed by the treachery of men and by exiles alike.



THE STORNLANDS

Long ago after the fall of the empire, there was a kingdom in the north that men called the Stornlands. The land was harsh and cold, with little sun and ground that took much labor to yield any crops.

Along the northern coast of the Stornlands sat the city named Pax. Pax was a port, and the sails of ships from many differing regions colored its skyline as trade goods were brought in and shipped out.

Pax made an excellent port, for it sat along a sheltered cove that was easy for mariners to navigate. Further west, a great river flowed south from the sea to the capital Vur Burin, also known as the City of Swords, for northern steel was a highly prized commodity and the weaponsmiths of the Stornlands were famous for their craft.

The Old Vairn Road crossed the region, connecting Vur Burin with Pax and to the rest of the world to the south. A testament of the engineering feats that the Armatellum Dynasty had brought during the age of its imperial rule, the road was an engineering marvel that was still heavily used even hundreds of years after the fall of that empire.

It was during this time that the king of the Stornlands, a man named Sardis, had been on the throne for several years. King Sardis began to ponder his own end, as men who begin to leave their younger days behind often do. He began funding projects headed by his alchemists and wizards to unlock the means to prolong his life.

It was during this time that King Sardis was approached by a gaunt shadowed figure that called itself The Shaper. The Shaper told Sardis that if prolonging his life was what the king really wanted, that he could have his wish, though it would come with a price.

The king was skeptical but asked the creature what the price would be for such a gift.

“The first-born child born of every woman in your kingdom shall be the price. They will be given at the Feast of Ascendance where they will be taken by my servants unto me, where they shall serve me the rest of their days.”

King Sardis contemplated the price that was asked, and then replied that if the Shaper could prove that his elixirs worked as promised, that he would have the first-born children of his kingdom in payment.

“A taste I shall give you then King. A taste, and then I shall return on the next moon to get your answer.” The Shaper handed the king a phial filled with a dull brown liquid. Desire to cheat death was stronger than skepticism over what could be contained within the liquid, and so King Sardis drank the contents of the vial.

As the Shaper had promised, the elixir rolled back the years on the king. His vision became clearer, his hair and beard darker, and his strength and vigor returned to where it had been as a younger man.

The Shaper laughed mirthlessly to himself, for humanity as always was predictable in their wanting to put a stopper on death and time. Across the kingdoms, similar covenants were being undertaken by other biomancers and their pet kingdoms, for the elixir was but a trivial brew to concoct yet it did as it was said to do and many of the human kings coveted the long years it granted.

When the Shaper returned at the next moon, the king agreed to the exile's terms, for his children were grown and his people could afford to pay the price for his lengthened life. From that night, all first-born children born of every woman would be given unto the Shaper to serve for the rest of their days, and that delivery would happen annually at the Feast of Ascendance during the spring equinox.

The people of the Stornlands chaffed at this royal decree, and several revolts had to be put down by the soldiers of the realm. Such was the price that the king felt he could afford to pay to cheat death.

As years rolled by, the king's wife and queen took ill and passed of her advanced age. The king, however, stayed young. Already unpopular, the people began to whisper that their ruler was in league with demons and necromancy, and trade began to strain as those once friends began to turn away from suspected heresy. The church as well began to look closely at King Sardis, though they could find no trace of dark magic upon him.

Through all of this, the king met a dark eyed, dark haired beauty named Cirilla. The two fell in love, and a royal wedding was celebrated throughout the north. It did not take long for the couple to consummate their wedding, and Cirilla became pregnant and soon after bore a son that they named Phillip.

During the Feast of Ascendance, Sardis bore Phillip away to his mountain retreat, intent he was on saving the boy from the Shaper. Surely, the king thought, one boy would not be missed.

The Shaper noticed the missing babe, and the night after the Feast had been held, the exile visited King Sardis in his bed chamber.

“Our agreement was for all first-born children born of every woman in your kingdom to be given freely, yet you have failed to deliver yours unto me.” The Shaper said, leveling an accusatory finger toward the king.

“You cannot have my son creature.” King Sardis spoke back, his voice full of venom and passion taking his heart. “Begone from my chambers and never return to this place.” He commanded.

The Shaper nodded his head, for humans he knew would turn against their word when they felt it suited them.

“Ashes King Sardis. Ashes are what you and your kingdom will be. Cursed will be your nobles. Cursed will be your generals. Your landowners and your sheriffs, they shall live alongside you until the end of the world. No food will satisfy, nor drink will satiate your thirst. From this day on I promise, your kingdom will remain forever a golden treasure cursed for all time.” With that, the Shaper left the king to ponder those words.

The morning after the Shaper’s departure, the king and queen were awakened with a terrible hunger that gnawed at his belly. No servants were around to serve their breakfast. There were no soldiers patrolling the streets. No children were playing, and no vendors were selling their wares.

The city was eerily quiet.

Sprouting from bedchambers in many houses as well as on the streets were beautiful golden fungus that spilled a warm light. The Shaper had turned all the kingdom of the Stornlands into a glorious creation that served naught but by the light that was once their spirit.

King Sardis and his nobles slowly eroded and became twisted parodies of what once was. Driven by an unsatisfiable hunger, their teeth became pointed and their hands twisted into claws. They stooped to lope on four limbs like dogs, and like a feral pack they haunt the cities of the Stornlands to this day.

This is the curse of the north. To this day, the Stornlands lie in ruin. Nature has begun to reclaim the cities and the farmsteads. Those that have traveled north either do not return or come back speaking of twisted creatures that are neither living nor dead that haunt the countryside.

Yet the curse of the north is not enough to stop nations from sending armies to reclaim what was once a bustling and thriving kingdom. The saga of the Stornlands has not been fully told, and it will be up to you to pen the next chapter in the tale.



A KING WITHOUT A THRONE

Alfred, King of the Cursed lands and King of Nothing, took up the mantle “The Black” said to have been originated by his people to represent a lord without land, or a king without a throne. He was born displaced from his rightful lineage in a nameless village off a nameless river that flowed north into the cursed lands of his heritage.

As a young boy, his parents kept his ancestry secret. They wanted Alfred to grow up away from the rumors and the legends and the darkness that had haunted their family for over one-hundred years since the fall of the Stornlands and the curse of the Shaper. It was only by happenstance that their ancestor, a great-nephew of the king (for it was that Sardis had been said to be almost one hundred and fifty years old and thus while appearing young his immediate family had long perished) had been south in the borderlands with his wife and children when the curse took hold over the north.

Alfred grew into a young man as the years passed on over that nameless village off the nameless river that flowed north. He was not a remarkable man, being of normal height for his people, and possessing no unusual features or physical feats. His parents had taken up trading and it was through them that the boy-turned-man learned the trade routes between the villages and towns, and where he had learned how to barter and parley with others. While he was not a remarkable man physically, his charisma was keen and his ability to persuade others was notable.

Upon his sixteenth year, Alfred was granted a share of his father and uncle’s trading company. He was also let in on the secret of his heritage, and that to the north there lie the bones of a kingdom that his family once ruled. Inspired by this revelation, Alfred would take the next couple of years to learn the mercantile trade and to grow his share’s wealth. Taking advantage of his travels, he would also seek out and commission any who had information on the legends of the north and what had once been known as the Stornlands.

As time passed, Alfred’s wealth grew as did his knowledge of the northern realms and of the legends of the Exiles that reportedly dwelled there. Most of the people that inhabited the kingdoms since the fall of the Old Dominion did not put much stock in the tales of the ancient spires that were said to exist throughout the lands. As such, much of the information that had passed from scholars to Alfred after some coin had also passed between them were treated as stories meant to scare children more than being full of useful and pertinent information.

It was not just the knowledge that Alfred was acquiring on his mercantile journeys either. With the success of his trade, and the multiplication of his trade routes that he had begun architecting, Alfred also began conscripting and signing on mercenary soldiers to travel with him, for he knew that to take back the north it would require more than stories and optimism. It would require honest steel and blood as well.



The acquisition of such a force concerned the nobles, lords, and minor kings where Alfred and his caravan traveled, for none were pleased at such a force as Alfred's (as he had collected an impressive array of men for gold has an allure all of its own).

It was in the minor kingdom of Gahlrun that the king known as Guthrud had Alfred detained and brought before him in his palace (which was naught more than a glorified fortified manor). Guthrud appeared before Alfred in his war finery, though his belly had grown ample in his long years and his best fighting days had been long behind him. His war priests also made a spectacle of appearing impressive with their fine ceremonial robes and clerical implements gleaming in the firelight.

Guthrud and his clergy held Alfred for four days and four nights. Each morning would begin with the same question; the King Guthrud would ask Alfred who he was and to which king he was sworn to that such a large military force be allowed to march through his kingdom without challenge.

Every morning Alfred would respond that he was Alfred, and that he had donned the title of the Black for he was a king without land and was the descendent of Sardis, the last king of the northern Stornlands. Every morning, King Guthrud and his clergy would refuse to acknowledge that Alfred was a king of a cursed land, for none would dare claim kingship over a land that was a blight and where the shades of men haunted.

It was on the final day of Alfred's captivity that he had once again answered the king as to his identity, and where once again the king was prepared to refute Alfred's answer when there came a thunderous knock at the door to the king's hall. The door was opened, and a terrified looking attendant rushed into the chamber. Not far behind him, a large bronze skinned man ducked

under the lintel of the door, and behind him a man that Alfred was relieved to see, for it was his uncle.

The large man with his uncle bore armor of an older make, and it shone a gleaming steel that reflected the warm fire of the great hall. There were etchings of the older languages scripted onto the steel of his shoulder guards, and at his side was a plain looking sword that was sheathed and peace bonded, for even the boldest of warriors knows that to enter a king's hall it is required that their blades be bound.

The man introduced himself as Legatus Gemina, an officer of the imperial legion, and that he was there to retrieve the one known as Alfred and to escort him and his mercenary forces north. There was an uneasy silence that descended upon the hall, for the king did not wish to release Alfred from his detainment as he felt he was an agent of his enemies and that his armies were present to invade his kingdom.

However, neither did the king wish to challenge the imperial remnants, for while they were said to be scattered and powerless, all felt the specter of the empty imperial throne and knew that it remaining empty was not a foregone conclusion and woe betide they that challenged the legion during those times of uncertainty.

After conferring with his clergy, King Guthrud agreed to release Alfred into the custody of the imperial legion, under the condition that Alfred and his forces never return. Alfred of course readily agreed with those terms and was promptly returned to his men.

Legatus Gemina was true to his word and intent. Alfred's uncle had made sure that information pertaining to his nephew be relayed to him regularly, and when the news of the military force that he had raised began circulating through the lesser kingdoms, he knew that trouble could be potentially brewing. While they were scattered as they were, the legions were still a potent fighting force even in their smaller numbers, and Gemina and his troop would become the spearhead of the force that would move north back into the cursed Stornlands.

It was the reputation of the legion that had saved Alfred from imprisonment or execution. It was a gambit that Alfred's uncle had successfully played to rescue his nephew.

Understanding that the time had come for the reclamation force to move into the cursed lands, Alfred and his force would make winter camp along the southern border of the Stornlands. Such a borderland was not inhabited for no man had interest in being so close to a land said to be haunted and cursed by the shades of men that had been cursed to eternal punishment and torment.

Alfred played his final card that winter, as his men built a fortified burh on the southern forested border that protected them from all sides by any enemies that may lurk in the north, he journeyed a ways south to secure the final piece of his legacy.

After tracking its whereabouts and spending a great deal of coin to secure its authenticity, Alfred was able to secure a pale green rhombus which was said to be the long cold remnant of a

primordial shard. The rhombus cost Alfred nearly all the considerable wealth that he had amassed and required some considerable faith that it was genuine and not a fake, but with it in his possession he had his best smith set it within the hilt of his sword, an Old Dominion blade that was allegedly owned by the heroic guardian Legates Maximus which he called the Storm Blade, for the smithing process that created the blade had left remnant marks in the metal that resembled forks of lightning.

Alfred knew that a nexus of great power lay close to the southern border of the Stornlands, and with the proper rituals the shard could be awakened. With such an awakening, the impossible could become possible. The Stornlands could be cleansed of its curse, and a living king once again sit upon its throne.

Without this cleansing, any who were caught within the curse laid by the enemy would suffer the same fate as the people that had lived there several generations in the past. This was a piece of information that Alfred knew was vital to securing his kingdom, yet a piece of information that he would have to keep to himself, for if the curse of the Stornlands could be proven real, no army would march willingly into its jaws.



The winter wind moaned as it swept through the fir trees that marked the entrance of an ancient wood in which the burh that Alfred had his men built near. Fresh snow had fallen and lay amidst the boughs, frosting the green needles white. A pair of sentries clad in furs and bearing the red, white, and yellow of Alfred's forces walked nearby. The moonlight was bright that night and made the snow that much brighter. The air was thick with the smell of woodsmoke that floated lazily from the openings in the many dwellings that had been hastily constructed behind the burh's wooden palisade.

"Did you see the way that she was looking at you tonight in the hall? You are a lucky dog you are Bill Biggs. Most of the boys aint ever getting near any woman, not while we are up north anyhow." One of the soldiers jested to the other.

The one that had been called Bill Biggs was the bigger of the two (a fact that may have been reflected by his surname). Broad of shoulders, his chainmail glinted dimly against the moonlight as he blew into his hands and rubbed them together to try to get some feeling back in them. The cold had been wickedly sharp all winter, and that night had been no exception.

"If I were you, I wouldn't be worried about what others are getting up to with the ladies Fulson. You just need to keep your head screwed on straight and see this campaign through to the other side with the rest of us." Biggs said, a note of sour disposition in his voice.

"That's your problem, you can't see the humour or the joy in ..." Fulson was cut short by a nearby sound of crackling twigs snapping in the undergrowth of the forest. Both men jumped and reached for the swords at their sides.

"What in the name of the Mother was that?" Fulson asked, slowly drawing his blade. The frost on the steel made it stick a bit, but he was able to free it with a little effort. "Probably just a deer or a bunny." Grinning, Fulson lowered the blade. He was taking the piss at his own reaction.

"That aint no bunny." Biggs said, pointing his sword out into the darkness within the trees. Fulson looked and took a moment for his eyes to adjust to the gloom before he could make anything out.

There in the darkness staring back at them was the silhouette of what looked like a small child. Its hair was white, almost as such as the snow. The child wore light clothing that looked several generations out of style, and a pair of black leather boots that had bone plates protecting its feet and climbing up the ankle to the lower leg.

Both men stared slack-jawed at the sight. It was far too cold for a child to be alone in the forest dressed in such a light manner, and the entire scene made their skin crawl. Something was not right.

The child looked up at both men and held their gaze. Its eyes were black and alien. Its skin porcelain-like and a close resemblance to its hair. Its mouth quivered for a moment before it split horizontally like an insect's mandibles. Small needle like teeth glistened in the moonlight, and a hollow rustling emerged from its throat.

Biggs and Fulson fled back to the Burh. The fairytale stories were real. The north was indeed cursed.

AN ANCIENT LINEAGE

The lifespan of a man is exceedingly small and is seen as insignificant in the larger scheme of things, particularly those of the much longer-lived races. To those within the spires that have seen the march of many generations of humankind pass before their eyes, it is as a speck. Therefore, when the human kings began to make contact once again with the spires, the biomancers within were prepared to offer them what they came to find to be the most common request asked of a human: to stave off the cold touches of death.

All about the region as the spires were beginning to have contact with humans once again, the news had become similar. The human leaders wished to extend their life and in return would provide a supply of fresh biomass that the Directorate would use for its experiments. Warfare was another means to simply take the matter that was required, but when the humans were willing to give of it freely in exchange for a fairly simple tincture, it was simply illogical to expend valued resources by force when that was not necessary.

Producing the tincture was not very consuming as to the exiles had learned long ago how to extend a lifespan and so the knowledge of its secrets were fairly elementary, where to the humans it would seem like wizardry or arcane. Once secrets are revealed, often that arcane knowledge is simply determined to be “science”.

The tincture once absorbed by the human would refactor their base chromosomes to stop shortening their caps, thus ending the aging effect. The negative of such a procedure was that if this was given to humanity en masse, that they would breed unchecked and quickly overwhelm the land and its resources.

The localized spires had communed on this topic and all agreed that to restrict it only to the kings and queens would be acceptable in return for the large bounty of biological matter that would be granted effortlessly.

The Shaper had demanded children from the Stornlands, and in those years had gotten a steady supply of them. Children were easier to experiment on as their younger minds did not have as much programming to remove and their cellular structure was still flexible enough to accept the changes that the experiments wrought on their forms without killing them outright.

The biomancer had accomplished two noteworthy achievements during this time. The first had been the creation of what he had called his Oculus. The Oculus were human children, only reconditioned and reprogrammed to remove any semblance of humanity from their beings.

His experiments totally rebranded their neural networks within their brains and replaced them with pretrained neurological weights that “remembered” training and memories that the human subjects themselves had never experienced. Essentially creating agents that were fully trained and able to perform the duties necessary by merely letting the neurological tinctures perform their work with intravenous tubes connected to the cerebral cortex.

Once trained in this way, the Shaper went about doing what he did best and what his namesake implied: he reshaped their flesh to better perform the task that he would set them about doing as his spies. Musculature was made stronger through metallic weavings that prevented fatigue and injury, enhancing strength and speed. Metabolisms were made more self sufficient by producing chemical reactions that provided energy, enabling the agents to subsist off of a wide variety of common substances such as grasses and even silica found in common gravel.

The very pinnacle of the reshaping of these children was not their physical augmentation, but rather their ability to transmit their sights and senses to others build like them and ultimately to the Shaper himself. This provided him with a network of agents that could blend in with humanity as needed and provide perfect reconnaissance that required no messages being sent with risk of interception. The Shaper could see what he wanted from any agent at any time, thus enabling him to keep his knowledge of the area as up to date as he needed with only the effort required to connect to their sensory output.

It was this network, this Oculus, that the Shaper had deployed throughout the Stornlands that had enabled him to see Alfred's mercenary armies approaching from the south as they entered his borders.

His agents rarely engaged in combat themselves, for that was not their function or what they were built for. Though they looked like children, these Oculus produced tremendous speed and would only fight if necessary. The resources required to produce the perfect agents was costly and the Shaper was a conservative individual that did not like to squander his stores over small mistakes or the death of his tools if it could be avoided.

The second great achievement that the Shaper had achieved was the potent and devastating pheromone that had transformed most of the Stornlands population into naught but glowing fungus. This pheromone had taken many years and many resources to produce to its current potency, but the rewards and benefits had been great enough to provide the Shaper a seat with the Directorate, for it provided his spire a passive and hardy renewable resource that could not fight or spread in destructive ways, and had the added benefit of quelling humanity with less effort than providing its kings with tinctures that extended their grubby lives.

The transformation from human into its fungal equivalent was fast, taking only several hours to complete. It was spread through the air via pheromones which when breathed by humans would trigger transformational code in their DNA structures which broke down their molecules and refashioned them. While extremely painful, the subject would continue to live on, though unable to move or do much of anything other than exist, and to reproduce through spores.



The fungus structure that the human would become still had much of its core biomatter samples remain intact and was able to be harvested easily enough without any resistance (as it was essentially a plant laying on the ground). With it capable of reproducing, the Shaper had reduced the human population of the Stornlands to an agricultural wonderland that could not defend itself but provided all of the materials necessary for the Directorate to not only advance its stake in the long-term plans it had for reshaping its destiny, but also for providing the Lineage upgraded output for its armies and desires as needed. At least while the Lineage was still useful and provided the Directorate with the resources it needed to continue.

A side effect of this transformation was that the soft golden glow of the fungus was pleasing to behold, and the Shaper considered it a form of art. It had become a kind of ritual for

him to venture into the wildlands near the ruined remnants of the human settlements and think on his latest experiments while gazing at the golden light in the darkest hours of night.

Having watched the humans for generations, the Shaper knew that the quiet time between generations would soon pass, and that others would follow in the old king Sardis' wake to discover the riches and resources of the north for themselves. As such, when the Oculus began showing him images of Alfred's army moving north, the biomancer knew that it was only logical that they had followed the roads north after all of this time, and knew that the next steps of the coming days and months would be to reveal to them that the fairy tales of monsters and demons in the cursed lands and shadowy places of the world were in fact real.

The time of the awakening was now, and the drone vats had begun to be opened by servants of the Directorate. While those forces would need a moment to acclimate themselves to time spent outside of their vats and of the spire, the Shaper put out a call through his Oculus which found the mad ancient king Sardis.

A dirty hole he had found to live in, and the Oculus pulled him from it he was frothing and spitting and quite out of his mind. The child that was the Oculus spoke to Sardis, not in the voice of a small being, but in the voice of the Shaper himself. Sardis immediately ceased his babbling and his ruckus and heard what was commanded of him from his true master.

"The time has come old king for you to defend your realm from the invaders of the south. War has come, and your soldiers must defend their home." The Oculus said. An intelligence glinted from the mad king's yellowed eyes as he nodded slowly, a runner of spittle flowing from the corner of his decayed and twisted mouth. The time had come for Sardis and his royal court to go to war.

ONCE LIVING NEVER DYING

Death is a force both feared by the living and embraced by the old, for it is the natural end to a cycle that begins with the birth of life. It is the reclamation by the world of a spark given but only briefly, and it is a rest that the old gladly take for a life lived long is a life lived hard.

The Shaper's experiments into the human spark and what gives them life enabled him to not only extend their life indefinitely, but also to use these "gifts" to punish those with whom he was not happy. While eternal life is something that the young would gladly pursue, as the years wear on and life begins its slow grind over one's spirit, it is that death that becomes welcome. When life loses the joys it brings, and food no longer has taste, water cannot slake the thirst, and sleep cannot rest the weary, one's mind begins to deteriorate rapidly.



So to was it with the ancient king Sardis and his court, his advisors, and all those landowners and sheriffs that had been appointed by the throne. While the rest of the settlements and population centers had been transformed overnight into a helpless fungus, the king and his most loyal of followers were given the gift of eternal life. The gift that Sardis had been granted by the Shaper, only this time with an added twist of losing all pleasures that life could give.

It does not take long for the human mind to begin to unravel when the pangs of hunger and the claws of thirst begin to gnaw unending no matter how much meat or how much ale is consumed. Like a house of cards, the collapse is fast and total. An entire lunar cycle after the events of the fateful night of the ruin of the Stornlands, Sardis had taken to the forests and to the caves. His crown began to tarnish. His body leaned out to starvation.

A season had passed. Then another. Then another. Sardis the king and all his court soon resembled animals more so than the men that they once had been. Broken teeth, yellowed eyes, and long twisted tongues sought any living creature for their flesh and their blood, but nothing would bring them any satisfaction.

What had once been living, could now never die save at the end of a sword or pierced by a bolt. The Shaper's punishment had both tortured the king and secured loyal servants, for Sardis in his twisted mind felt that if he served well enough that his master might one day relieve him of his torment.

The Shaper had no intention of doing any such thing.

It watched jealously from the safety of a thick hedgerow. The creature's long purple tongue ran with a thick milky white saliva that oozed down to the ground slowly. It was drooling, for it watched as a soldier nearby drank from a waterskin. Resentment and anger welled deep within the miserable creature, for it could not remember the last time it had tasted and enjoyed a drink of water, even as it gorged itself on streams and ponds time and time again. Yet the man standing in the wooded clearing seemed to be enjoying the drink as any normal thirsty person would.

The creature knew deep down that it was not a normal person. It could not even recall what that had been like, so long had it been since it had walked on two legs and had been possessed of humanity. All it knew was the hunger and the thirst and the longing; constant traveling companions that gave it no respite at all. It had been punished. Punished by an unseen and uncaring deity that could not be made content. It would keep punishing it. It would keep setting its innards on fire and boiling its blood and keep it forever starving no matter how much it ate.

Jealous yes. Jealous of the man that was able to walk under the sun and drink water and enjoy it. Jealous of the man that could smell the air and feel the cold of the early spring day without it stinging like nettles raking across its skin. What did the man do to deserve these things?

The creature knew it had done nothing to deserve these things and so it decided that the man must die. That its flesh must be rent and torn and devoured so that maybe this time the creature's roaring belly could be satisfied.

Slowly it crept on all fours, blending in with the budding spring undergrowth as best as it could with its dirty skin. The soldier was not paying attention, which would prove to be a deadly mistake.

Like a missile the creature struck from behind the man. It had launched itself from a full four limbed gallop, clinging to the back of the man's armor like a primate, wrapping its gangling legs about the man's chest and tearing at his throat with filthy fangs.

Chunks of flesh were ripped and a great gout of blood shot through the air, coloring the green spring foliage with the crimson spray. The soldier couldn't even get a proper scream out, but choked on his own blood as he gurgled loudly. Falling to his knees, the creature tore another hole out of him, and then another. Blood sprayed its face and down its lanky body, and runnels of bloody saliva flowed down its chin as it devoured the flesh while the man still choked on the ground underneath it.

There was no taste. There was no feeling. The blood should have been hot, and the flesh should have felt like something, but again there was nothing. Nothing but the stain of murder and death, but no satisfaction at any of it.

The creature stared down at the soldier as he breathed a final desperate farewell to the living. The spirit vacated his eyes and he stared coldly up at the sky. What could have passed for frustrated anger began welling within the creature. Looking up to the sky it prepared to unleash a pitiful wail but then was struck for a moment by an instinct. It stopped him for the briefest of moments.

It sniffed.

Again, the instinct overtook him. He must move. Move fast to where the instinct was telling him. It was being summoned. It must obey...



Campaign

The following section details how to arrange for a narrative campaign set in the Stornlands.

Here you will find the chapters, scenarios, and special rules that will be required to run the overall campaign and play out the Stornlands Saga.

As well as all of this is included a special skirmish ruleset to alter your games of Conquest beyond...

PLAYING A STORNLANDS CAMPAIGN

Conquest of the Stornlands is a linked narrative campaign that features five chapters that connect. Each chapter consists of a skirmish battle that can be fought before the main battle, and then the main battle itself.

Narrative campaigns differ from other styles of organized play (such as leagues or tournaments or node style campaigns or map campaigns) in that they focus heavily on the story and the background event on what the campaign is telling. This is where the word “narrative” comes in to play: the story aspect is the most important aspect of an event such as this.

Narrative campaign scenarios are written to allow some form of balance between the two players but is not a system where balance is the most important aspect. There may be unusual conditions for victory that differ from standard competitive games of Conquest, and there may be alternate rules that exist only in the scenario. Indeed, some scenarios may be more difficult for one side to win over than the other. This is the meat of narrative campaigns, this variety that you may not experience in standard competitive games of Conquest.

How Stornlands Works

To begin the campaign, simply start with Chapter 1, read the narrative surrounding the chapter, and prepare to play the skirmish battle and the main battle that follows. From there, continue with chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 and take note of which side wins each battle and what rewards they receive in future chapters.

What Armies Do You Need to Play?

The Stornlands campaign was written from the perspective of the 100 Kingdoms fighting the Spires. It may be that you and your play group use different factions. This is fine, use whatever faction you wish! Campaigns are for telling stories, and this work is just a framework for your own tales. Change whatever you need to fit in with your armies.

Many groups have more than two players in them as well. This is common, and many people can participate in a campaign. King Alfred has allies, as does the Shaper. Alternatively, perhaps you are commanding a portion of the force that King Alfred has brought north, and your characters represent that section of the army. There is no hard-and-fast way that groups should organize themselves to play a campaign. It will depend on each group.



A common way to organize multiple players into a single narrative is to divide players up into “teams”. Players all fight someone from the other “team” and the overall battle result is

summed up to determine which team is ultimately the victor.

The process for summing up games like this can differ. Some may total up victory points earned and use that as the measure for overall victory. Others may simply sum up the number of games won overall by each side. Each has advantages and disadvantages. Choose whichever is right for you.

Once the campaign concludes with the final battle in Chapter 5, one side will have achieved ultimate victory. Either you will have helped King Alfred ascend the throne of the Cursed Stornlands and see a king in the northern realms again, or the Shaper will be victorious and Alfred's men naught but biomass for future experiments for the Directorate.

That outcome can only be decided by you and your friends.

Additionally, troops and characters can acquire experience and gain additional abilities. These abilities are covered in the Appendix. After each main battle, refer to the Appendix rules for abilities to see how your armies and characters can progress through the storyline.

Special Characters

Also found in the appendix of this document are special characters that you can use to play your games found within the Stornlands. These characters should be freely allowed in any campaign games as they make up important characters to the storyline, but for games beyond this campaign you would require your opponent's express permission before fielding them. Remember that this campaign is not an official Para Bellum work.



CHAPTER I

THE LEGENDS WERE REAL



Alfred moved his army from the defended burh at the southern border of the Stornlands a week before the spring equinox officially happened. A break in the weather had brought a premature end to the winter chill and the snows had receded, leaving a muddy but passable route into the forest.

The army needed a fortification to base their operations out of. Through his studies, Alfred read about an old imperial fortress ruin outside of the forest to the northeast perched on a hill to which a river wound around. Its walls being of imperial build were likely to be still standing, or at least mostly standing, and whatever damage was remaining could be repaired by the army's engineers and soldiers.

Possessing the fortification would be vital for without a defended base in which to launch forays further north, the army would be at the mercy of both the elements and any enemy forces that would surely be drawn to them.

Ranks and files of soldiers marched steadily through the thick and ancient forest. The soldiers had all been well versed in the tales of the spires, but none could really separate what was fact from what was legendary fiction. The smallest shadowy movement would draw nervous gazes, and the simplest of sounds kept men up through the night in their camps.

They were right to be afraid.

The Shaper had known that Alfred's men had entered his domain as soon as the first footsteps had fallen. The Oculus Network had been staying to the shadows and watching the army as it moved, silent in their reconnaissance. The Shaper, able to watch the army's movements as if he himself were present, assembled his own force to meet the armies of men for the first time in many generations.

The biomancer was not an experienced warlord, but his logic was strong, and he was confident that Alfred's army was moving to the imperial ruins. Whether or not this would prove to be folly by attempting to engage the enemy army in the forests as opposed to an ambush in the ruins themselves, none short of those able to change the course of history could tell.

The opening battle of the Stornlands campaign took place in the shadowy forest near dusk. Scouts from the main army rode or walked far ahead, and to the sides of the main body of the army. Militia and men at arms made up the bulk of the scouts though all were supported by rangers or other members of the imperial legion to add their experience to the eyes and ears of Alfred's army.

Surviving members of the scout teams reported similar experiences. There was the hissing sound of a gas, and a cloud of colored mist appeared in the forest. Silent warriors dressed in bone and completely covering their faces walked out of the forest armed with spears and swords made of the same material as their armor, and the movement was so sudden that it took much of the scouting parties off guard. None could have known that the colored mist was in fact a pheromone concoction that allowed the silent spire warrior commander a means to communicate its intent without the use of words and to imbue its warriors with battle vigor.

It turned out that the legends were real.

What unnerved many of Alfred's men was the lack of emotion or noise that these silent warriors made. The only noise that could be heard was the creaking of armored joints, and the sound of steel clashing with bone as the soldiery attempted to fight its way out of the trap that the Shaper had set for them.

Most of the scouts died within minutes, and the rest of the scouting parties fled back to the main bulk of the army crying alarm as barbed arrows whirred mercilessly through the half gloom of encroaching night.

The main army had truly little time to turn to face the incoming enemy as their column was hit on both sides by a silent foe. Panicked men ran back to the army from the outskirts, their faces spattered in their dead comrades' blood. Warriors turned back and forth, not knowing from which direction the enemy lay before the first clones emerged from the trees.

Men died by the dozens as commanders were unable to turn to face an enemy that was all about them. The imperial legions barked commands, calling for square formations that would allow their warriors to face in all directions and protect each other's backs. Seeing the imperial soldiers adopting the squares, the household retainers and mercenaries began doing the same. Seeing

new resistance, the clones withdrew back into the shadows, leaving Alfred's army to stand waiting for the next attack, eyes white with fear.

Seconds passed, then minutes. The tension was thick in the air and could be cut with a freebooter's blade. The next attack was more terrifying than the first. Whereas the faceless clones were silent and unnerving, the next wave of enemies were mammoth ogre-sized creatures wielding weapons that were nearly the size of a grown man.

These brutes slammed into both sides of Alfred's column, and the square formation that the imperial troops had called for helped alleviate that some. However, with no ranks to support them, the men's formations had large holes tore into them with no reserves to step forward and take the place of the fallen.

Shields were battered aside, armor rent and torn, and bodies mangled as the brutes did their work. Alfred was no soldier or warrior. Indeed, his skill with a blade was rudimentary at best, having been taught the basics but never honing those abilities beyond that. However, it is not always the best warrior that leads, but the one that can instill the most out of his men.

The front part of the army had been largely untouched. Legionary officers were barking orders and the units up front were also adopting a square-style formation to protect them from all sides. Alfred called out to Legitus Gemina, knowing that he needed to send reinforcements in to quell the losses or the army would be doomed before it had even started.

With the din of battle all about them, Alfred gathered his household guard while Legitus Gemina led his steel legion and they counter charged the brute assault on either side of the column. Hit in the flank as they were, the brutes staggered from the coordinated assault that Alfred and his men had returned with.

Howling with rage, the creatures swept their massive blades from side to side, but the displacement of the attack had been enough for the column to counter as well, and the square-formation pushed outward as men-at-arms began stabbing forward with their swords instead of simply being battered behind their shields.

As the brutes began to falter, a buzzing sound filled the air. Swarms of arrows began zipping through the air, finding their targets with rapid succession. Shadowy archers with three arms were making quick work of the counter-assault.

Alfred was deep within the brute's ranks and could not spare a look about him. Most of his men were spared the ranged assault, and the screams of the dying had been constant when the battle had first begun. The missile fire was ebbing much of the battered square formations in the center of the column, forcing the lines to contract even as the brutes that had been assaulting them had been slowly driven back into the forest.

Ilitanus Levette, a mercenary mage that Alfred had recruited over the course of the winter months, began producing arcane fire which she then used to hurl into the shadowy archers. It did not take long for the forest around them to begin to smoulder, though the wood was wet

from the snows. The smoke gave some cover, and Ilitanius pointed out targets for her crossbow retainers to hit.

Counter-fire began pouring into the forests as the archers were pinned to their trees or driven back. None of the enemy made a noise as they died, a fact which was unnerving to the human soldiers fighting on.

Surrounded as they were, the enemy warriors were being pushed back which heartened the men. A clarion horn was heard from the rear ranks and the thunder of hooves could be felt pounding the turf. Colorful knights arrayed in their battle heraldry lowered lances and struck home into the remnants of the brutes and the men-at-arms in the middle of the column gave a cheer.

Legend had turned to nightmare, but nightmares could be overcome with steel.

As the smoke of the fires set by Ilitanius' arcane magic began to become thick and cloying, a red mist hissed forth from the woods near where the brutes had emerged. Amazingly, the dead brutes that had been torn by steel and lance began to move again, painfully screaming and bellowing in an incoherent rage as they forced themselves back to their feet again, their wounds weeping caustic fluid, but their fighting power not diminished a bit.

Alfred immediately knew that the core of the enemy's forces was nearby and that it must be dealt with. Looking about, his officers and leaders were still in the middle of the battle, and the would-be king was the only one that had the wherewithal to find and end the commander, or what Alfred assumed was the commander, of the enemy forces.

Calling an attack, the king commanded his force to move within the shadowy forest. The household guard lowered their halberds and with their king they advanced into the gloom.

Clusters of enemy warriors were arrayed under the boughs of the great trees, their shapes barely made out in the gloom and the smoke. Alfred had his chance to end the battle there, but his inexperience at command and at warcraft marred his decision making. The enemy commander could be seen nearby, a tall yet gaunt figure wrapped in a cloak that appeared to be made of skins.

It held a twisted staff in one slender hand, and that staff was crowned with a series of hollow pipes which bloomed forth colored smoke. It was that smoke that was responsible for commanding the force, Alfred knew, and it was that figure that must be killed.

The king's tunnel vision left him vulnerable to the assassin that was lying in wait. As the household guard and the king approached the enemy commander, the assassin leapt forward, slicing a bone edged dagger into the throat of the man next to Alfred and readying a slender blade that could pierce the king's armor and slide into his heart.

The assassin was almost insect-like, with a mandible that spread open revealing black needle like fangs, and with a croaking sound it lunged. Alfred was spared death that day by one of the sergeants of the household guard. The man sacrificed himself that the king might live, and the

unit surged forward. Alfred was taken aback by the speed and skill of the would-be assassin, but it was outnumbered by the guard. Knowing its fate should it stay, the assassin bound away quickly.

Other shapes appeared in the gloom, and a white smoke began issuing from the commander's staff not so far away from Alfred's position. As this new smoke filtered amongst the burning trees, a wailing keening could be heard. Massive shapes began crashing through the forest, their steps vibrating the earth beneath them.

Terror had come to the forest then. Terror had taken its form as four of these creatures appeared and like fast moving ants scuttled forward and slammed their bulk into Alfred's army, wailing and keening the entire time.

The nightmares were real, and they did not stop. They kept changing into more horrific visages. The center of the army was about spent, and counter charge had succeeded against the brutes, but this new threat promised to shatter the center entirely and scatter the army to all four corners if action was not taken now.

Alfred called the retreat. It was a fighting withdrawal, one that would push the army northward toward their goal in the end. The army had to escape the forest, or it would never reach the ruined Imperial fort.

The Steel Legion combined with a heroic charge by several units of Household Knights were strong enough to break the hold that the terrifying abominations had held over the center of the army. The imperial legions in all had been the true heroes of that battle, even though the army had been defeated and was on the retreat. Their fighting experience had saved the army from certain calamity.

With the abominations dislodged, the army moved as one, with the imperial officers barking orders and the enemy warriors counter attacked wherever they were seen by flanking forces capable of moving up and down the line with speed.

A mile of moving through the forest in this manner led to a more open clearing where the trees thinned out considerably. Alfred arranged his forces onto hills where his men would have a vantage. Pieces of the enemy army poured from the forest to harass them, but when the ranged elements of the king's forces were set up on the hill, they were able to provide supporting fire into the foe.

Alfred's forces were battered and bloodied, and he lost nearly a quarter of his army in that ambush, which was considered a victory from the Shaper's perspective. The exile had lived long enough to know that wars were rarely won in a single battle, and the fear and uncertainty that that ambush in the forest had led to combined with the losses suffered would make the short-lived men think hard about why they were in the north to begin with.

Harried as they were, the king reached the imperial ruins five days later. Its walls still stood though weakened and his engineers immediately went to work fortifying their position.

The Shaper would find that instead of pressing the attack in the forest that day and perhaps taking more casualties and bleeding more warriors from Alfred's army, that by letting him go in his hubris of thinking that the spire forces were superior, that the men of the kingdoms would prove to be just as formidable of a foe as the hated dweghom.

Hubris and arrogance would find their footing in this tale once more before it concluded.



SHADOWS IN THE DARK PLACES

With intelligence given to him by his Oculus, the Shaper deploys forces within the southern forests to greet Alfred and his army. The trap has been laid; the spire forces have silently deployed on either side of Alfred's marching column. The only thing that could expose the trap are Alfred's vanguard scouts, which must be silenced...

MODELS NEEDED

Both forces may choose a skirmish force of up to 150 points. Due to the restrictive nature of the terrain, neither force may utilize cavalry or brutes in this scenario.



BATTLEFIELD

The Battlefield area is 36" x 36". There should be liberal amounts of forests and trees as this scenario takes place within the southern forests of the Stornlands.

There were no tracks or roads off the column, and the table should represent that, a dense wooded landscape.

OBJECTIVES

This scenario is an ambush scenario where the goal of either side is simply to survive and defeat the opposing force. The game is played for a total of 10 turns or until one side has completely been removed from the table. The side that remains is declared the victor. If by 10 turns neither side has achieved victory, or both sides have been eliminated at the same time, the outcome is a draw.

PART OF THE LARGER BATTLE

Should the spires be victorious and defeat Alfred's vanguard scouting force, they will be able to surround his column. If this is the case, then during the Forest Ambush scenario, the 100 Kingdoms will only be able to come in from their own board edge, while the Spires army may freely come in from their board edge or the side board edges, bypassing the normal rules for reinforcement lines.

Should the 100 Kingdoms be successful, the Spires trap has been spotted and Alfred and his Priory Legion Commanders successfully square the column to face the trap. The 100 Kingdoms may re-roll any failed reinforcement rolls for the Forest Ambush scenario.

STORNLANDS SCENARIO 1

AMBUSH IN THE FOREST

The trap has been sprung. The Shaper deploys his forces to engage Alfred and his men in the southern forests. Hit on all sides by the unnerving enemy that up to that point had only existed in fables and scary stories told around the campfire, the men of Alfred's army must come to grips with what they are engaging and keep their column together, that they make the ruined Imperial fort with numbers enough to continue the campaign.

ARMIES

Players can play whatever point limit they feel comfortable with, though 1500 points is recommended for this battle.

BATTLEFIELD

The table of play is 72" wide by 48" deep. The table should have 7-8 pieces of forested terrain as well as one or two hills. The battle takes place in the forests of the Stornlands. Forested terrain should count as Hindering as well as breaking Line of Sight. Units within forested zonal terrain can see out and fire (and be fired upon) though count as being Obscured.

GAME LENGTH

Ten turns or until one side is completely destroyed or one side has scored 10 points.

DEPLOYMENT

Standard, both players roll off and the winner chooses their battlefield edge from the wide table edges.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the end of each turn, players score points for the following

- 1 Point for each enemy non-warlord command card removed from play
- 2 Points for killing the enemy warlord (stacks with any secondary objective)
- 1 Point for each Secondary Objective Completed (up to a maximum of 3)

SPECIAL RULES

The Spires player may grant one character and every regiment within that character's warband the *Flank* special rule.

Additionally, any modification granted by the results of the *Shadows in Dark Places* skirmish scenario will be applied to this scenario.

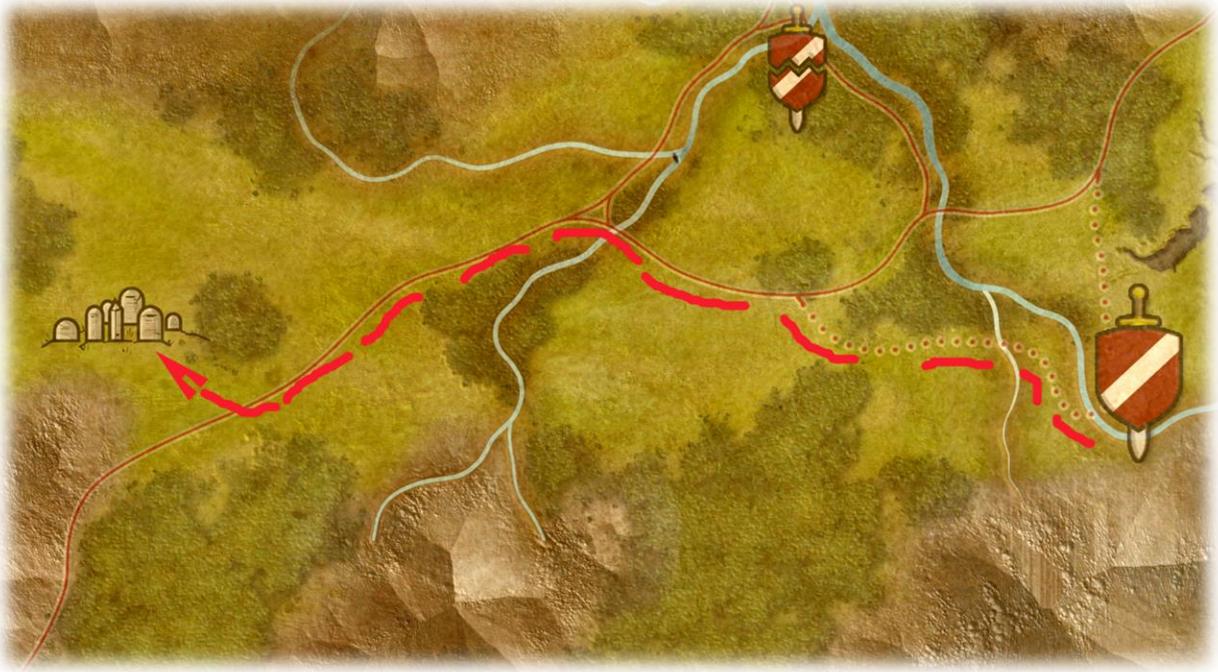
OUTCOME

Record the outcome of this battle. Should Alfred lose, he will lose 150 points of his army from the final scenario. Should he win, the Resolve score of his entire army will be granted a +1 bonus in the final scenario.



CHAPTER II

AWAKEN



The imperial fortress ruins provided adequate cover for the army. The walls were in poor repair, and Alfred immediately had his engineers begin cutting trees and mining stone for repairs to prop up and fill any gaps. The work went quickly, for the imperial build was good and had a strong foundation. With a solid base of operations to work from, Alfred turned his attention to the next phase of his battle plan after a month of toil.

The Shaper was aware of the army nestled in the rebuilt fort, but as of then was still not concerned, for he did not know that Alfred possessed a primordial shard. Had he been aware of this nugget of information, things may have transpired differently. Alfred himself was proceeding as if the shard was the real thing and not a hoax or fake. Some faith was needed for the next steps of the operation to succeed, and the Shaper's lack of focus in attacking the human army while the fortress was more vulnerable to attack could prove to be a costly mistake.

It was not just hubris that had stayed the Shaper's hand, however. Resources for war had been contentious to come across, and the Directorate had denied him access to the full materials that were required for a full-scale counterattack. The Directorate were not particularly worried about Alfred or worried about the human army in general, for their numbers were smaller, they had no nation to call their own which meant that they had no resources to fall back on, and the Spires had worked to maneuver their own allies into the picture with rival kings being tempted with tinctures and concoctions that lengthened their lives and gave strength to their human bodies that nothing natural could have done.

With these limitations in place, the Shaper kept his spies vigilant and regularly monitored the humans within the fortress ruins, studying their work curiously as a scholar would watch ants build their hill, all the while he was preparing his newest generation of fighting clones the chance to mature before rushing them into combat. The battle in the forest had been costly for the spire and throwing away good clones was something the Shaper was loathed to do. Indeed, wasting resources on the current human irritation was something that the Directorate felt could be handled with minimal resource expenditure.

To oversee the theater of combat, the Shaper was granted the help of a highborne named Irridius. Known as the Taskmaster, a self-important title that he had granted himself for his successes were many and his failures largely unknown, Irridius brought a wealth of knowledge gained from the great experiences shown by the long wars of the Dweghom. His avatara legion had received high accolades from the Lineage, and with his appointment as War Marshal of the Stornlands, a spire success was all but guaranteed to the Directorate.

Upon Irridius' arrival to the Shaper's spire, he demanded a parade of welcome and a hero's entourage. The Shaper was less inclined to acquiesce to what he deemed ridiculous pomp and circumstance, but was directed to grant Irridius' request for without the war marshal the Directorate felt that more resources than need be spent would be lost, as the Shaper was an excellent scholar but not experienced in the arts of warfare and combat with the lesser races.

The Shaper had his clones parade march from the spire and create a corridor of warriors for Irridius and his avatara to walk down. Bright blue banners flew from the spire, something not normally seen as the Shaper was never one to put much stock in heraldry or the arrogance of banners and the pride that they inspire. To the north, not far from the spire's location, the sea lay and with the sea its storms that often blew onto shore. That day a magnificent storm could be heard booming north of the mountains.



The War Marshal and his entourage of avatara proudly stepped through the stationary clone warriors arrayed in deep ranks, all the while lightning flashed from the north adding to the grandeur. The display was considered impressive, even to one such as the Shaper. The clones standing in military formation while the avatara marched to the spire were filled

with something that could have been described as pride at seeing these statuesque constructs in all of their war splendor, for surely no enemy could stand against such a force.

Irridius' arrival was outwardly a show of support from the Lineage granted to the Directorate. The Shaper knew that his coming was also a warning. Failure would be met with harsh punishment, death, or even worse: demotion. As such, he knew that he needed to not only tolerate the War Marshal but also to ensure that their mutual goals were met so that the highborne could find something else to do with his time far away from the Shaper's spire.

The War Marshall had dealt with many of the Directorate's servants and scholars and the false politeness was met with equal, yet haughty return. The Stornlands may have seemed like an out of the way realm given up by the humans and left to grow wild, but the resources that were hidden in plain sight were known to the Exiles, and a way to harness the energies that coursed through the land were heavily desired. Particularly before the dweghom became aware of them, for that long and ancient rival could not be given any advantage in the long game. The humans that had returned were simply a reminder that while long patience was vital, so too was action needed when it was needed.

As such, with the arrival of the War Master, his first decree was to receive a tally of forces available to him and to prepare to crush Alfred and his army before they could spread any farther.

* * *

As spring waned onward and the days became brighter and warmer, the fields began to green, and life returned to the Stornlands once more. The buzzing of insects could be heard, the songs of the birds carried through the trees, and the new sound of human industry added to the tapestry as saws cut lumber and new stoneworks were laid to fix broken masonry.

The old roadways that had been maintained during the times when the Stornlands were populated still existed, though were in a bad state. However, following old maps of the region, Alfred knew that following the broken roadway to the west would lead to a main thoroughfare that had led to the capital, and headed away from the capital in the wildlands was a cairn that was also written to be built over a power nexus.

Several moldering tomes of knowledge agreed that the ancient people that had dwelled in that region recognized the intense power that was said to lay there and so had built monuments and places of adoration as well as buried their more prominent members there.

It was from that power nexus that the primordial shard could be "awakened" and thus its power fanned bright and used against the Shaper's sorcery to keep Alfred's men safe from harm. The primordial stone was in effect a keystone that Alfred needed to unlock to have any real chance of success against the alleged curse that was said to have torn through the Stornlands generations prior.

Having not only spent a considerable sum (nearly all of his ownings) to obtain the shard, Alfred also had paid heavy coin for academics and scholars to uncover a ritual that could be used to help

align the shard with the powers found at the nexus. Alfred just had to get the shard to the nexus at the right time.

The weed-choked roadway was filled with holes and in many places had been tore up by nature or by other things best left to the imagination. Alfred's army followed it west with no resistance from the Shaper or his forces, though many felt the eyes of the unseen watching them from the shadows. Indeed, the oculus were all around the army, and the Shaper was kept abreast of the army movements as they happened.

Thinking that Alfred was moving to retake the old capital ruins of Vur Burin, the Shaper assembled a force of clones and brutes to meet the would-be king among the crumbling



buildings. Hidden among the old structures, the spire force was silent and mostly unseen; a perfect ambush for the invading army that would certainly finish the job that they had started in the southern forest not so long ago.

Alfred had no intention of marching on the city ruins without having first awakened the primordial shard, however. So it was that when his army reached where the road split north to the capital and south, the army prepared to move in the latter

direction toward where the ancient cairns were said to be.

The imperial bridge that spanned the river had fallen into the waters decades past, and it was this delay in the army's movement that allowed the Shaper to react to his mistake, for it had cost Alfred most of the day ferrying his men across the river.

Once on the other side of the river completely, the army began heading toward the south west, away from the ruined capital.

Had the Shaper not had an Oculus to give him this information almost immediately, Alfred would have made his destination and concluded the ritual before the spires could even begin to react to the change in plans. As it was, the Oculus constant intelligence gave the Shaper an extreme advantage, one that Alfred would have to deal with throughout the entire military campaign.

Alfred's forces had a healthy head start to the cairns from his position at the junction in the old imperial road. The spire forces had an advantage in that their forces could be whipped to breakneck speeds without suffering from weariness and fatigue such that humans were vulnerable to.

The human army was not moving slowly at all though. They kept scouting pickets running back and forth nearly five miles away from the main column to keep the king and officers informed on the surrounding countryside. There was very little sound save for the marching boots and horses hooves on the old stone road. Wind whistled through the weeds, creating a ghostly haunting travel, and the pale spring sun gave little warmth as it rode in the sky.

Nighttime came, and still the army marched, for Alfred did not wish to waste any time in reaching their destination or leaving it to chance that their campsite be spotted by the enemy and crushed in the open field. Such it was that the army came to the place of cairns shortly after the midnight hour.



The sky was clear and bright with stars, and that starlight gave the field a dim majestic beauty, almost as if all color had been leached from the world and replaced with dark greys, blues, and pale whites.

Pale mist crept amongst the tall grasses, and many men muttered to themselves or to the fellow next to them about the cursed shades of past men that must have haunted this place. The ancient and worn cairns themselves thrust from the ground like skeletal fingers, pointing at the night sky. Many were inscribed with worn and mostly illegible runic writing; the language of the ancient people that had lived and died here generations before the Stornlands had even been conceived.

Alfred had his scouts begin digging earthworks around the field to fortify the area from any potential enemy attack. The men, scared as they were, did as they were told but none were happy with leaving the safety of their numbers to fan out and begin digging ditches and trenches with which to trip up the enemy in the haunted darkness.

While fortifications were being hastily dug around the perimeter of the ritual site, Alfred's mages had begun preparing by teasing energy from the soil using formal methods of geomancy to identify the more potent currents of power and where they were located. All were in agreement that the ancient texts had proven correct; the place was soaked in arcane energy. Such was it that no creatures had disturbed the nexus in generations that its power had built up to such a level that the very foundations of the land trembled.

At the center of it all rose a cairn that dominated the surrounding field. Nearly fifteen feet tall, it was carved in ancient runes and shimmered with silver under the starlight. Alfred knew that it was a conduit of sorts, referenced many times in the ancient texts that had led him to that very

place. As the cairn was before him, so too then he hoped that the ritual given to him and learned by his mages would also be genuine.

Preparations were beginning to be carried out as the mages and their novices began preparing the site and lighting torches to aid them. Oils, salts, and elixirs were removed from leather satchels, and the ground around the cairn consecrated with their elements while words of power were chanted and harnessed; the better which to awaken the lands that would in turn awaken the shard.

As fate would have it, Alfred's ritual would not go off without a hitch. The Shaper's forces had finally caught up to its enemy and the spires marched headlong into the sacred cairn field. They were being met by the perimeter defenses that Alfred had been wise enough to begin erecting, though the timing of their attack had coincided with the men only being partially completed with their duty.

Yells of alarm began going up and then a horn blasted its warning. Silhouetted against the night, the silent forms of the spire engaged with the picket defenses. The scouts on the perimeter had to do their best to hold the enemy back while Alfred attempted the ritual. The army would be tested sorely again by the monstrosities of their nightmares as wave after wave of drone soldiers rushed into the breach to open up the human defenses and let their entire army into its heart.

To the army's credit, they were much more prepared to face the creatures that were so unknown to them that had terrified them in the forest during their first encounter. The silent ranks of clones were no longer as unnerving, and indeed they fought and fell to steel just as any man would. It was their ability to get back up with limbs severed or broken that put even the stoutest of warriors' heart to the challenge.

Within that center, the shard that Alfred kept in the crosspiece of his sword began to illuminate with a soul glow of its own. It started a deep-sea green but began to flare out into a bright emerald. The shard was awakening. The ritual was working. The only question for Alfred was would he have the time to complete the ritual and drive off the attackers?



MAN THE BARRICADES

As Alfred and his mages prepare the cairn site for the ritual that will unlock the primordial shard that the king keeps mounted on the crossbar of his sword, he has his scouting parties form a perimeter and begin digging battlements and barricades to thwart any unseen attack by the enemy in the thick of the night. And attack they did, with Alfred's main force assembled together, the Shaper set forth to deliver a terrible blow.



MODELS NEEDED

Both forces may choose a skirmish force of up to 150 points.

BATTLEFIELD

The Battlefield area is 36" x 36". Scatter trees and low hills about the table. The 100 Kingdoms may place up to two finished 6" sections of earthworks (walls, sharpened stakes, pit traps, etc.) on the center 18" line of the table.

OBJECTIVES

The spires need to stop the building of the earthworks by driving off or slaying the workers. The spires can claim a victory if all the opposition are slain or are driven off by routing before the 8th turn.

The 100 Kingdoms have two objectives. The first is that they need to complete at least 10" of defensive barricades, and second they need to hold off the attackers for 8 turns. 100 Kingdoms claim victory if they have models on the table at the end of the game and have built at least 10" of new barricades (starting barricades do not count). Otherwise the game ends in a draw.

SPECIAL RULES

Night Attack – line of sight can only be drawn from 12" or closer.

Barricades – Barricades count as linear terrain that is hindering, dangerous, and a defended obstacle (refer to skirmish rules)

Building Barricades – A team of three models takes one turn to create a 2" line of effective barricades.

The teams must be in base-to-base contact with each other. Teams of two can barely do the job, creating 1" of effective barricades. Troops building barricades may not move more than 2. If troops perform any other action other than a move of no more than 2" in that turn, a barricade may not be built.

New barricades must be built at least 8" away from the 100 Kingdoms table edge. Barricades are finalized at the end of each turn.

PART OF A LARGER BATTLE

Should the 100 Kingdoms be victorious, they complete their earthworks. They may place up to four 6" sections of earthworks prior to the battle (which count as hindering and dangerous terrain in the main game)

Should the Spires be victorious, they sweep away the earthworks. The Spires may re-roll reserve rolls in the first two turns.

STORNLANDS SCENARIO II AWAKEN THE SHARD

Alfred's position was revealed to the Shaper by his Oculus. Alfred has ordered fortifications built around the perimeter of the cairn site and has begun the ritual to help awaken the primordial shard in his possession. The Shaper is logical enough to deduce that whatever it is Alfred is after must be stopped immediately.

ARMIES

Players can play whatever point limit they feel comfortable with, though 1500 points is recommended for this battle.

BATTLEFIELD

The table of play is 72" wide by 48" deep. The cairn fields have no trees of any kind. The terrain is rugged and filled with boulders and stones and is quite hilly. Cairn piles may be set up as well, being either impassable terrain or hindering terrain depending on its height and the players' desires. In the center of the table, a zonal piece of terrain roughly 8-12" in diameter should be set. This is the primary cairn, the source of power. This cairn should be impassable.

GAME LENGTH

The game lasts for 10 turns, one side is completely destroyed, Alfred's force has all of its characters slain, or Alfred's forces have racked up 20 ritual points.

DEPLOYMENT

Standard, both players roll off and the winner chooses their battlefield edge from the wide table edges.



VICTORY CONDITIONS

Alfred's objective is to accumulate 20 Ritual Points. Upon reaching 20 ritual points, Alfred's forces are declared victor. Any other result is a victory for the Spires.

SPECIAL RULES

Night Fight – the maximum range for determining line of sight is 12”.

Ritual – the warlord of the 100 Kingdoms (Alfred) is able to cast the Ritual. This counts as a spell and even non-casters may attempt it. It has a Difficulty of 3 within 8” of the Ritual Stone or a difficulty of 1 anywhere else on the table. Non casters have five dice they may use per turn on the Ritual. Every success is worth a Ritual Point. Every natural roll of a 1 may be rolled again for more points (only one roll of this kind is permitted per turn). Every failure from that bonus roll counts as a hit against the caster (make defense and resolve rolls as normal).

A model that has performed a ritual that turn cannot deny a duel (they are too busy focusing on the ritual to run and hide). A model that refuses a duel that turn may not perform the ritual.

Should the ritual caster be slain, the player may nominate another character to take his place. The Difficulty drops to 2 if within 8” of the Ritual Stone in this case. If all characters are slain, the scenario is a victory for the Spires.

OUTCOME

Should Alfred be successful, then for the duration of the campaign his sword will count as Awakened (refer to Alfred's rules for what effects this has on the game).

Should the Spires be successful, then for the duration of the campaign all 100 Kingdoms stands will be afflicted with the Decay-1 special rule, as the Curse of the Stornlands begins to take hold.



CHAPTER III

VIOLET FIELDS OF VIVNDAEN



Following the ritual at the Cairn Fields, Alfred and his army retreated east to the fortress ruin that they had set up camp at. The spires forces had been depleted in the battle and could not stop the retreat and so had also withdrawn to lick their wounds.

Upon returning, Alfred had a bittersweet surprise awaiting him. The church had sent a troop of soldiers to bolster the efforts in the north and those men had arrived the previous morning. Alfred's armies needed the reinforcements, though accepting the assistance of the church was never something to take lightly. Alfred knew it came with a condition and knew that the church's involvement in the reclamation of the Stornlands was not noble or altruist, but rather was being done for strategic purposes to further the theist agenda.

The head of the church forces was a short man named Ranald Dio. His face was chiseled in the imperial manner, with a hooked nose that made him look like a falcon, and long curled black hair that he kept oiled and held back by a red leather strip. His armor gleamed silver in the summer sunlight and he wore a waist coat of scales that had silver woven into them to give the impression of shimmering light when he walked.

Dio was a pleasant enough man. He did not hold any high office within the church but had been sent north when no one else in the clergy wished to go. Alfred distrusted the church deeply, but instantly grew to like Dio and to enjoy the man's company. As much as Alfred got along with the priest though, there were those within Dio's ranks that openly disdained the would-be king and that friction would later cause problems in the military campaign.

That evening while the king supped with the priest, he asked many questions. Dio was ever the statesman and deflected most inquiries of intent to simply state that the church was interested in

the spread of its doctrine and to ensure that the kingdoms prospered under the proper guidance and tutelage, as had been directed and done since the Old Dominion. The deflection was expected, but was given with the added mirth and confirmation that with the presence of the imperial remnant within Alfred's ranks, the church may have been worried that Alfred would become another usurper intent on placing himself on the imperial throne, or to back another for imperial rulership with a new kingdom behind him to help bolster that individual.

Alfred did not have much opinion on the imperial state one way or the other. To the young king, the old ways had failed, and the imperial throne left vacant because of those ways. It was true that there were some within the ranks that had been interested in seeing a new emperor rise to unify the kingdoms once more, but that was not the intent of the reclamation of the Stornlands.

Dio accepted those thoughts from Alfred with grace and was more at ease to not be in a situation where he would be forced to attempt to intervene or impede the king's goals on behalf of the church. The Stornlands had been a part of the kingdoms once, after all, and it was acceptable for a king to sit on its throne again. A king on the throne would mean peasants in the fields, and that would mean the restoration of the church and of the tithe revenue that would follow. These were all of great importance to the church and to its leaders, as power usually is.

With the reinforcements from the church unexpectedly bolstering their ranks, Alfred and his commanders retired to the king's personal quarters to discuss the strategy of the next part of his plan.

There were ringing the ruins of Vur Burin a series of protective watch towers which served mostly as a way of communication of threats and intent to the main city more so than any defensive mechanism, simply because the towers could be circumvented by armies.

Claiming one of these towers would provide Alfred's army a vital foothold toward the inner landscape with which the capital sat and would enable the army a place to reinforce and recoup, much like the ruined fortress had given them.

It was not known how much of the territory the spires forces had currently possessed, if any, or if indeed there were any enemy presence within the city itself, for it had been said to have been abandoned for decades. Alfred felt strongly that the spires commanders would not give up such an important site so easily and would have it defended, for it was the logical attacking point of the southern human armies.

Pulling from incredibly old maps, the advisors and the king decided on a south eastern tower for their objective. All of the towers lay on the circular imperial road, and this one had the added advantage of being built atop a rocky hill that gave it a particularly strong defensive position and would be ideal for falling back to should the need arise.

Additionally, a water mill was located on the site and the remnants of a large imperial-held farm could be reworked and brought back to production to provide supplies and food to the armies

longer-term. Such a location combined with its proximity to Alfred's army was deemed the most sustainable target to launch an attack against which would also grant the most benefits to the campaign on a longer term.

So it was such that the tower that was called Vivndaen on the parchment became the focal point of the next phase of the reclamation. Preparations were made and the new troops that had marched north with the church were intermingled with the existing veterans.

That evening while supplies were being packed into the baggage trains that fed and fueled the army, Alfred held a feast for his men and for the newly arrived followers of the church. The day had been a perfect one, with the temperatures being comfortably warm and the sky painted an azure blue with few blemishes. The sunset was even more spectacular, washing everything in a reddish hue as the men assembled and ate a meal of venison and roots together in the muster field.

The theist priests held a service, speaking of the direction of God and what his plan was for the people of Ea after the Fall. The reclamation of the Stornlands, they preached, was part of the overall plan of God to allow for man to build his standing back up through blood, toil, and suffering. It was a redemption, they claimed, and a humbling and honorable redemption at that.

With the spirits of his men being filled with holy zeal, Alfred allowed the service to extend into the night, for it seemed to do his men some good to feel that their experiences against the horrors of the spires were all a part of a mandate dictated by a divine being to test their mettle and to allow them to prove themselves worthy of a new kingdom in this new world.

Alfred also knew that the church was growing in power, with the fall of the Emperor and the loss of the Orders, there was naught any that could check the power of the theist movement. Such issues would have to wait for later, the king reasoned in his head, for now the enemy was before them and whatever fell purposes they had in store for humanity it was certainly worse than what the church had in mind.

Those horrors were soon brought to the doorstep of the men, for as the service concluded a band of scouts had made their way quietly to where the king sat watching the priests. A creature had been captured near the fortress and killed, and they had brought it with them for examination.

Curious, Alfred excused himself and went with the scouts where they entered one of the storage buildings near the perimeter of the wall where the army stored rudimentary supplies such as tar and pitch and wooden planks. A pair of torches burned brightly within the building and on a makeshift table the king saw what appeared to be a small girl laid out.

A gaping wound in the neck indicated where the scout's arrow had killed the child, and her skin and leather clothing was soaked in her blood. There was a sour chemical odor about the girl, and the king placed a finger on some of the blood and held it up to his nose to confirm that it was the source of the smell.

“Look at the mouth sire, this is no child but a creature sent to us from our enemies to torment us.” One of the scouts said, poking the dead girl’s mouth with the steel tip of an arrow. Alfred examined her closely and noted that the jaws were set in such a way similar to an insect, able to split vertically. A wet smacking nose issued from the mouth as Alfred used a dagger to slowly open it, splitting the mandible in two horizontally like an ant. Blackened needle like teeth were revealed, certainly not anything that a human would possess.

“I suspect these creatures in the guise of children that had once dwelled here are a form of scouting party. This body should be burned immediately, we do not know if it is still able to function or perform any of its nefarious duties even after life has left it.” Alfred said to his men.

All showed a heavy distaste for the perversion of the human form laying on the table, and they couldn’t dispose of the body fast enough after the king had departed.

* * *

Miles away, the Shaper knew that one of its agents had been slain. He felt keenly its disconnection from his mind. While the loss of one of his projects was not an overly emotional thing for him, the Shaper did lament the loss of materials and bio matter that could not be recovered.

That was something that would need rectified in future versions of his Oculus, he thought to himself, scratching the idea down on a parchment with a rough stone ink nib that had been made into a form of finger cap; an adaption he had made for himself long ago to remove the need to carry about writing implements.

The Shaper had called upon King Sardis for this next stage of the battle. Spire drones had taken heavy casualties, and while more could be called upon efficiently, Irridius as War Marshal wanted a faster deployment of soldiers to shadow Alfred’s army and strike when it was at its most vulnerable. The War Marshal thought very surely Alfred would be attempting to enter Vur Burin and knowing that the human army was located still south in its refortified ruin, it only made sense to deploy soldiers near that part of the realm to meet the human king when he made that fatal move.

While the spires were readying its next batch of clones to move south into the jaws of battle, the Shaper prepared Sardis and his nobility to perform an ambush of sorts at the appointed place and time. Sardis and his nobles did not account for a large number of troops. The Shaper thought that there may have been a little over one hundred of the ghoulish creatures at his disposal, but within the confines of a ruined environment, the confusion that they would sow could prove to be instrumental.

Sardis was only happy to oblige, for the creature always hoped that he would serve his master well enough to be finally rewarded with the return of some kind of human sensation, or even death. The Shaper let him continue to think this, for it continued to serve his purposes. If the

creature was foolish enough to delude itself, that was less energy that the Shaper did not have to expend reassuring it.

Irridius himself led the forward elements of the Spires as they relocated the bulk of the soldiery within Vur Burin itself. Oculus fanned out around the city to watch for Alfred's approach, and on the day the column was sighted, Irridius was pleased that he felt himself correct.

Alfred's forces had marched north the day after the girl-creature had been found and slain. Word had spread around the army to be wary for children in the forests or hidden areas of the world, for they were not children but rather instruments of the enemy himself. Two more Oculus had been discovered on the march north, and both had turned flight but were cut down by the expert aim of the king's rangers.

With the scout network being slowly removed, the Shaper did not have as much intelligence as he had been enjoying, and thus Irridius had to employ some guess work at where Alfred would strike.

Vivndaen was mostly intact still, though the plaster that had protected its stones had long weathered away and some of the stonework had began to come loose. The wooden reinforcements and structures sagged from ruin and age, or were missing entirely, and the stout portal that barred entrance had collapsed.

The sound of rushing water could be heard as the river wended its way as it had always done, and the water mill's wheel had jammed and held stubbornly from the mill which could be seen on the approach to the watch tower.

The ruined city Vur Burin could be seen miles distant, its decaying walls silhouetted against the horizon. The grasses grew long in that place, and violets bathed the scene in lavender. Their smell was heady, the scene picturesque. The summer Stornlands were a primal place of beauty and decay all rolled into one.

As Alfred's forces marched closer to the tower, thunder rumbled overhead as a storm moved in. Forks of lightning flashed, and soon fat rain drops began falling, plinking off of armor and turning the ground muddy.

Taking the watch tower would allow for the king to fortify yet another location. It was another foothold to push north. They were met with the enemy.

A keening sound was heard, mixing with the thunder and the pelting rain. From the ruined watch tower the shapes moved toward the army. On all fours, the creatures loped eagerly to feed. Flesh stretched across emaciated frames, some wore the rotten remnants of royal finery still. All had twisted features and yellowed pointed teeth from which long tongues lolled.

"Form ranks, the enemy approaches!" Legatus had called, and the men closed shields together and prepared for the enemy charge. It was then that the monstrous avatara emerged from their flank, formerly unseen. A distance away watching the battle unfold, Irridius smiled and

congratulated himself on his tactical genius as he guided his avatara in for a crushing flank strike. The statuesque vehicle responded smoothly. Irridius had been working the avatara technology for a long time, and he had gotten very skilled at their controls. His company, handpicked by him from the noble houses, all matched his cruelty and passion for carnage.

From within a command tent the lineage pilots sat around a smooth black marble table. Glowing runes etched onto the surface gave the interior of the tent a greenish hue and smoking incense burned, giving a heady odor that was said to help the pilots focus on their links with their avatara better.

Elter the Keen, Cairnwaech, Laeryl, Nikodemu, all were bonded in blood and murder and had desired nothing more than to be sent back to war for it had been far too long for their tastes since they had been let off of their leash.

“My tigress is as lethal as ever.” Cairnwaech grinned beneath her helmet as her avatara swept with its long-bladed halberd, cleaving through three human soldiers as if they were made of paper. Her war engine was decorated with golden filigree and painted to appear to have stripes, not unlike a tiger would have. Much like the avatara she controlled, Cairnwaech was aggressive and ruthless.

The avataraean-conclave gathered some distance away from the battlefield, safely away from the carnage but linked to their constructs via a mind synapse that allowed them to see, feel, and experience everything that their vehicle experienced. A sweet scent filled the air of the conclave; an incense pheromone that heightened the senses and made even colors appear to vibrate with their power. All within the conclave were focused heavily on the carnage to be had.

Irridius smiled broadly as the avatara struck home into the flank of Alfred’s battleline. The tall statues swung their weapons broadly, crushing men and driving the men back. The mayhem and confusion that the flanking maneuver had sowed began to spread and the highborne was enjoying every succulent moment of it.

“Lethal she may be Cairnwaech, but pales before the might of my Starfire.” Irridius chuckled. The sensations he received from his avatar were exquisite; the pleasure centers of his mind opening and vibrating with the joy of the murder.

All within the conclave laughed with full joy, for the primitive human line began to crumble as the creatures that had once also been a part of humanity crushed into the front, ripping and tearing at flesh with primitive teeth and claws.

Bowed but not broken.

Officers bellowed orders to restore discipline within the ranks and succeeded little by little in reforming the ranks. The avatara had enjoyed an uncontested butchering in the flank, but now the men they were facing redressed and began fighting back, knocking chunks of construction out of their enemy. The inexplicable happened next: the men-at-arms and human soldiers began fighting back!

Nikodemu's avatar, an obsidian brute with a bull-shaped head, shuddered as swords and axes fell upon it, and fell to the ground in a heap sending sympathy pains shuddering through the exile's mind and body.

Iridius snarled in both contempt and disbelief. Thunder rumbled and shook the ground, and the highborne realized it was not coming from the sky but rather from something else. He turned Starfire to face an oncoming charge of knights. Their armor gleamed in the daylight and their lances were colored with bright red spirals, each mount bearing a fleur on their bright red heraldry that represented Alfred and his domain.

The knights' charge hit home, and the resultant sound of steel meeting bone and stone was wrenching. Another pair of avatars fell to the ground suddenly, their forms trampled under the charging steeds as the violence of the impact took them down.

It had all happened so quickly, that what had seemed like an easy route had been turned into a stalemate. Iridius cursed and called the remaining Avatars back, their wicked weaponry flashing in defiance of the human countercharge. The knights themselves roared past the fallen avatars and then wheeled around to face their enemy and prepare a second charge. Dust filled the air both from the clods of earth that had been tore up by the destriers, and by the horrific wounds that the knights had inflicted in the construction of the avatars.

The human lines began backing out with discipline. The ghouls that the Shaper had employed in the first wave of the attack retreated as well to lick their wounds, terrified that the knights would notice them and not willing to put themselves in harm's way of a pointed lance skewering.

The damage had been done to Alfred's army as dozens of men lay about the battlefield dying or already dead, but the quick and easy route that Iridius had hoped for was not to be, and just like that what had started as a fast beginning to an even faster end had been stalled.

As the lines separated and the dying were heard screaming their death throes to the sky, both armies prepared for the second wave of the battle, and the violets of Vivndaen were watered with the blood of the fallen that day.

"The day is not over yet you primitive apes."
Iridius spat. Indeed he was right, for the second wave of the true battle had just began, but for that short time the highborn war marshal was content to fall back with his damaged



avatara to join the main line of clone warriors and brutes.

Iridius rose from his position with fury, sweeping the black marble table clean of smoking incense cones and bellowing his rage. The other lineage pilots stared in silence, none daring to say anything to further anger the high born, though a few smirked inwardly at his loss of control.

“This failure does not just sit on my shoulders; you all share it as well!” The highborne war marshal strode emphatically from the tent leaving the rest of his team to mutter amongst themselves.

Cairnwaech smiled broadly upon the highborne’s exit. She was like a shark sensing blood in the water.

“Iridius’ failure this time cannot be ignored by the high council. I think its time that we have new leadership and the time for Cairnwaech to be leader is at hand.” She said, smoothing her short red hair back as she sat back in her chair.

“The battle has only just begin Cairnwaech, the Highborn has not had failure just yet.” Elter the Keen told her, holding his head from the pain that the feedback had given him at his avatara’s fall from the knight charge.

Cairnwaech smiled at the pained lineage pilot and plucked a silvered goblet of wine from a small table behind her position, arrayed next to food and a pitcher of drink. She drank, the smile never leaving her face.

“Its only a matter of time brother. Its only a matter of time.”



RALLY AROUND THE FLAG

The initial onslaught of the Spires attack from the watchtower was devastating, and Alfred called a quick retreat to regroup. In the aftermath of this retreat, the air is filled with screams of the dying and orders are being shouted by desperate officers. The troops must now regroup amidst all of this death and counterattack the enemy. The sight of a friendly standard bearer being waved by friendly forces is the perfect thing to rally the troops!

MODELS NEEDED

Both forces may choose a skirmish force of up to 200 points. The leader model should be represented by a standard bearer. No flyers are allowed and no more than 50 points may be spent on non-infantry models.

BATTLEFIELD

The Battlefield area is 48" x 48". The battlefield should be set up using the standard setup in Appendix C. The battlefield is cut exactly in half, with one player claiming one half and the opposing player the other half.

OBJECTIVES

Each side is trying to rally their troops and exit from the opposite battlefield edge while trying to prevent their opponent from doing the same thing. The most important model to get to safety is the standard bearer, but he is the most useful model to rally your troops with as well!

For each model that makes it off the far table edge (the rallying point), score victory points equal to the points value of the model. The standard bearer is worth an additional +10 points to the score. To determine victory, tally the total score of the models that make it off the table. If the difference in score is 0-15 points, the game is declared a draw. Otherwise the player that scored more points is the winner.

The game ends after 10 turns. If one side routes or is destroyed, the other side must still try to get as many models off of the table as they can!

DEPLOYMENT

Each side takes it in turns to place three models at a time fully in their table side. Each model must be at least 3" from any other model (friend or foe). The last three models may be placed anywhere on the table (the leader/standard bearer may not be one of these models) at least 3" from any other model. This represents stragglers and the overall confusion of battle. **Models may charge in Turn 1.**

SPECIAL RULES

Route Tests – All models are at -2 resolve due to the horrors of battle. The leader / standard bearer is immune to this (and route tests per the normal skirmish rules) and any friendly model within 8" of the standard do not suffer this penalty.

PART OF A LARGER BATTLE

All points that escape the table successfully may be added to the army's force total in the next battle. (if a player has 50 points escape the table, they may add +50 points to their roster)

STORNLANDS SCENARIO III

TAKE AND HOLD

An important strongpoint, tower, or other garrisoned objective must be taken and secured at all costs.

ARMIES

Full armies of up to 2,000 points are used in this scenario from both sides.

BATTLEFIELD

The battlefield should be 72" wide by 48" deep. It should be set up using the table setup guidelines from Appendix C. The center of the table should have a watchtower or other fortified structure placed. This is the objective. The objective should be able to hold up to five stands.



GAME LENGTH

The game plays for a random game length, one player has been eliminated, or one player has conceded.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the end of each turn, players score points for the following:

- 1 point if the garrison terrain is held by a medium or heavy regiment
- 1 point for each Secondary Objective completed
- 1 point if the enemy warlord is slain or removed from battle

SPECIAL RULES

Character stands do not count as scoring in this scenario, only medium or heavy regiments capable of garrisoning terrain.

Random Game Length – at the end of turn 6 and on, a player rolls a d6. The game continues if the result of that roll is a 2+. The game ends after ten turns otherwise.

OUTCOME

Holding the strongpoint at Vivndaen will allow the controlling player the ability to have more troops available nearby, providing crucial reinforcements. The controlling player may add +100 points to their army roster for the remainder of the campaign.

CHAPTER IV

TREASON



After the battle at Vivndaen, the human army had shown the Shaper and Irridius that they were not going to be easily dealt with and just cast aside. Alfred and his men had given the spire lineage a black eye, and the time had come for the Directorate to take them seriously.

The Oculus was now being actively hunted by the human army, and anytime one of the agents had been spotted, the rangers would employ kill teams to chase down the asset and eliminate it. While many other operatives still remained active in the battlefield, the Shaper was beginning to lose his god-like ability to respond on the battlefield as new blind-spots had begun opening up with the passing of each Oculus.

It was clear to the Shaper and to Irridius that Alfred was going to try to take the city of Vur Burin. It had been the seat of power when the human kingdom had been alive, and it only made sense for Alfred to take the throne located there. From a strategic standpoint, the city was built on the junction of three rivers, and would allow soldiers to arrive from the south as well as for their soldiers to move north quickly to retake the entirety of the remnants of the kingdom.

Vur Burin also lay in ruin. Its fortifications had crumbled, the buildings within had decayed and fallen into disrepair, and the streets had been tore up by time and by the northern weather. For it to become prominent once more, Alfred would need to not only take it back from the Shaper but would need to invest heavily into the rebuilding of most everything within the city walls.

For the Directorate, the presence of the humans in the north was becoming unsettling. The experimentation that the Shaper had been conducting over the past few decades was beginning to flourish and such distractions were not only costly but would lead to delays that could last for

decades more. From the Directorate's perspective, this could not be allowed, and the human army had to be crushed not only bodily but in spirit to prevent any further incursions to the north by any emboldened to try what Alfred was attempting at that point.

Further hindering the Directorate's goals was the injection of Irridius as the war marshal, for while the Lineage and the Directorate's aim was the same, Irridius had brought with him a team that contained some internal conflict that was looking to tip the flow of battle against him. Status and position meant everything to those within the Lineage, and to see Irridius fall out of favor and leave a spot for promotion open was too good a chance to pass up, and for the pilot Cairnwaech that was an opportunity that she was not about to leave on the table.

This destabilization had remained hidden from the Directorate's knowledge, and indeed the Shaper did his best to avoid Irridius and to leave the war marshal to his own devices. Had he paid a little more attention, he may have seen the trouble that was brewing on the horizon.

While treachery had potentially been brewing within the spires ranks, it was the Shaper himself that was actively seeking to employ its use against Alfred. The Directorate had placed a heavy importance on removing Alfred from the field of play as soon as possible so that the real work that the biomancer had been employed in could resume. Militarily, such a victory was still assured by Irridius, but after Vivndaen, the Shaper was not predisposed to just taking the highborne's word for it. He had set out to make his own luck.

The humans had been renown for not only the great feats of spirit that they were often capable of, but also of their greed and of their fear of dying that haunted their minds like the ticking of an eternal clock whose beat never stopped sounding in their heads to remind them of their mortality. Greed and fear were both powerful tools, and one that the Shaper had employed to get what he had wanted countless times over the centuries.

Such it was that even the most haughty and arrogant within the lineage could be brought low by treachery as easily as a human could betray their king. Yet while the betrayal to the lineage was already brewing from within, the Shaper had to find a way into Alfred's camp. He had no solid intelligence on the senior officers under Alfred, nor had he any way of knowing which influential figure could prove to be the most barbed of daggers to betray the human king at the most opportune moment.

The Shaper chose to roll the dice metaphorically speaking, and had his clones retrieve as many of the dead humans that they could. Normally their biological matter would be sent to the vats to be processed, but the biomancer wanted a little bit more from his next demonstration.

Reanimating dead bodies was something that the Shaper found to be trivial, for he had been doing such experiments on many of the life forms of Ea for longer than he could remember. Bodies were nothing more than husks of meat that housed important sensory organs, and it was a matter of repairing those organs and sustaining the meat for a little while longer to make it continue to function.

Hastily animated dead were not very adept fighters or warriors, but they served their purpose well enough on the front lines providing targets with which to wear the opposition out. The Shaper did not need these human bodies to fight, he merely needed them active and able to possess basic locomotive capabilities.

Thus it was during the aftermath of the Battle of Vivndaen that the Spires forces collected as many of the dead off of the field and the Shaper set about the grisly task of hastily repairing their broken bodies and restoring their primitive brain functions to allow them to stand and walk about once more.

Alfred's army had noticed the vast quantities of the dead missing from the battlefield, for when they went about the task of collecting their own dead, they found the numbers to be much smaller than what should have been.

Spires forces were encamped before the city gate, and Alfred had his officers prepare for a second assault to push into the city on the next day. With the warriors of his army preparing for an encampment out under the stars on a late summer night, the Shaper made his offer.

Under the moonlight, sentries picked up the sound of the approaching warriors before they could see them begin to emerge from the darkness. A cry of alarm went up around the camp as men thought that they were coming under attack. Soldiers scrambled for weapons and grabbed shields, and officers were bellowing for shield walls to be formed.

The enemy warriors stood silently on the perimeter, halting just out of reach of the campfires' glow and leaving only their silhouettes to be plainly seen. The human army formed ranks quickly, their discipline honed under the fires of combat as they prepared to repel another attack.

Silence greeted them for a moment, as only crackling of the fires could be heard, for the Spires warriors made not a single sound. This trait had been unnerving when Alfred's men had first encountered them in the southern forests during the spring, but their experience fighting these creatures had numbed them to any fear or anxiety for they fell just as well as a warrior bellowing his last warcry from a well-placed spear or sword through the gullet.

After a moment of tension, the Shaper made his presence known to Alfred and to his army. Gliding out of the shadows, he was quite tall and lithe as well, possessing a grace of movement; a voluminous robe flapped in the night breeze. His face was hidden behind a leathery mask that had fleshy tubes inserted into it, though their purpose was not immediately visible.

One of his eyes was augmented, and the moonlight shimmered in its lens like a cat's eye is wont to do. The other was his natural eye and with it he watched and observed the humans arrayed for war before him. A good part of him wanted to dismiss this rabble as nothing more than vermin, but another logical circuit in the Shaper's brain reminded him that it was this rabble that had pushed this far north and had blackened the eye of the war marshal Irridius as well as defied the Directorate.

“I commend you humans. I commend the courage and spirit that it must have taken you to come north into this cursed land knowing that your lives would be forfeit and your suffering exquisite to defy those that have seen your lineage generations past grow old and die.” The Shaper’s voice was like gravel, and yet he commanded the attention of all souls that night. Even Alfred watched at the head of his men, saying nothing.

“As much as I commend you and your bravery, know that each one of you will die in these cursed lands and very soon if you do not abandon this foolish quest you have undertaken. Why are you here? To reclaim a kingdom? For what? To serve under him?” The Shaper pointed a straight finger at Alfred, though none followed the digit to look at their king.

“What does he offer you but death and suffering at the hands of our forces? We are legion here humans. For every one of you that falls on the battlefield, he walks again only in MY army. Do you not believe? Then behold! Gaze upon your fallen brothers!” The Shaper gestured both hands outward and the silhouetted battle line that stood with him took several steps forward before stopping in the firelight.

Men gasped. Weapons fell for a moment as the flickering fires showed Alfred’s soldiers what it was they were facing. Men that had only just previously fought against the Spires side-by-side and who had been cut down, were standing there before their former brothers in arms. Wounds had been stitched, shattered limbs restored, and weapons and armor retrieved once more though many also bore the bone-like armor and weapons of the other spire clones.

The Shaper had ensured that their faces were all visible, dressed and equipped as they were in the biomass that the biomancer so elegantly and efficiently crafted and structured. It was their faces that were most important, for that was the key to effectively reminding the humans of their fallen dead.

“Gaze soldiers of the southern kings. Gaze upon what will be your reality should you stay and continue this meaningless sojourn to your doom. One way or the other your bodies will fall, and your husks will be collected, and you will march again in this army that you see before me, as have your comrades.” The Shaper’s arms fell back to his sides as he let the gravity of his words descend upon the shocked men.

“I offer you once chance. Return to your homes. Leave these cursed lands or join the dead that you see before you now as one of our soldiers. If you still insist on fighting, then you will die. Your armies will fall. Piece by piece. Soldier by soldier. All the while you fall, we will grow in numbers. You cannot win this war. You are outmatched in every way. Return home. This is my offer to you, the offer of your very lives.”

The Shaper stood for a moment, gazing up and down the human lines confident that his message had been received clearly. The looks of fear and terror were logical, and if the humans were smart enough to do the mathematical operations in their head correctly they would see what a folly it was to continue to feed his army with more and more numbers while theirs depleted.

Nodding, the Shaper backed into the darkness while his soldiers, those who had once marched with Alfred, closed ranks to protect their new master before they too melted back into the nightscape until the sound of the shuffling of their feet faded and all that remained were the nighttime insects singing the ballad of the dark.

The fear that the Shaper wanted to drive home was real, but he had underestimated the other emotion that could be stoked within men that have seen such a gross perversion of the human form: rage.

Dio and the other priests were not impressed with the Shaper's display. If anything, the biomancer had been as a whetstone, sharpening the blade that was the will and drive to conquer and retake this kingdom.

There was little sleep that night as a war council convened in the darkest hours to discuss what should happen next. Alfred was not moved to retreat, and neither was the church.

"We are here not just to reclaim what was once ours, what was once a right and just kingdom of mankind, but we are here to remove this abomination that would twist the image of God in such a blasphemous way!" Dio had exclaimed during the council. "For while our men are filled with fear, know that they are also steel, and are wielded by the will of God Himself! This creature, this perversion is an enemy of God and we have been placed here as His holy flame to purify and cleanse this world!"

"We will race for the morning; we will hide in the sun until these creatures see the light! That God's truth is as hard as steel, His vision never dies, and that we will ride to glorious victory on the backs of the tiger that is His word!"

Dio was filled with his God's power that night and it moved all within the council. Indeed, after the council convened, the church held a dawn service which washed away the exhaustion and fatigue of a night spent in terror and dread from the twisted realities of what could lie the next day in battle.

The reclamation was quickly turning into a holy war for the church, and Alfred thought perhaps that was exactly what was needed. The backing of the church and a legitimate throne would cement his legacy and return the honor to his lineage of a broken kingdom lost by a failed king. His family legacy could be restored and perhaps then what was once an empire could be reforged.

Not everyone in Alfred's camp felt as he did though. Fear is a powerful slaver, and some were still very afraid of what was to come. While the church spoke of fire and retribution to their enemies, some discussed treachery and self-preservation.

Alfred's army prepared to march to yet another battle that morning. The Shaper had failed to drive the army away with his words, and the Spire would now have to defend the ruined gate of the lost city against the will of God and his fiery prophets. None could know of the treachery that could fall upon those men that day or what lengths cowards will go to save their skin.

BETRAYAL AT CAMP

Treachery and betrayal are unfortunately all too common. Shaken by what the Shaper has shown them, some men in Alfred's camp have decided to try and ambush the King as he returns from a scouting mission with some of his rangers. As he returns, the rebels attack and try to take control. However, they must hurry before any other troops nearby overhear the commotion and come to the king's rescue!

MODELS NEEDED

This is a heroic skirmish. Both sides field 250 points total and both sides must include a hero that is their leader.

BATTLEFIELD

The Battlefield is 24" x 24". A cluster of tents and / or huts are set up in the center of the board to represent the King's encampment. For scenic effect, additional trees or hedges should be scattered about the table.

OBJECTIVES

The objective is to kill the opposing leader while protecting your own leader. Once a force has successfully slain the opposing army's leader, the opposing troops are assumed to either surrender or retreat and the game is over.

DEPLOYMENT

The king is returning from a scouting mission with some of his best troops. He starts at the southern end of the table with his troops within 12" of him.

The rebel leader has planned an ambush at the encampment. His forces are scattered on the outskirts of the camp, placed anywhere within 6" of it.

SPECIAL RULES

No Routing – Neither side is subject to routing. As long as the leader is alive, the troops fight to the bitter end.

He is in Trouble – There are even more of Alfred's troops near the encampment. Starting on turn 4, roll a D6 at the start of each of the king's turns. On a 4+, D3 of any mainstay troop come on the northern board edge to help their leader. These models are in addition to the starting forces.

PART OF A LARGER BATTLE

Betrayal at Camp can play a hugely pivotal role in the war. If Alfred or the leader of the human army is taken out (depending on who your leader is), the church will take over the reigns of power and continue to lead the army to eradicate the abomination known as the Shaper and establish the old Stornlands kingdom.

Should Alfred fall, there will be desertion, and the human armies will lose 10% of their points in the final battle. Should Alfred prevail, he will be seen as being watched over by God (God wills it! Dio shouts to the army, filling them with confidence) and in the next battle the first resolve test to be made are automatically passed.

STORNLANDS SCENARIO IV BATTLE FOR THE GATES

Alfred's final push north is met by the Spires force at the ruined gates of Vur Burin. The former seat of power for the dead kingdom, Alfred's reign can only begin if he can secure the city. But to do that he will need to sweep aside the Shaper's forces. Unbeknownst to both commanders, there are traitors in their midst...

ARMIES

Full armies of up to 2,000 points are used in this scenario from both sides.

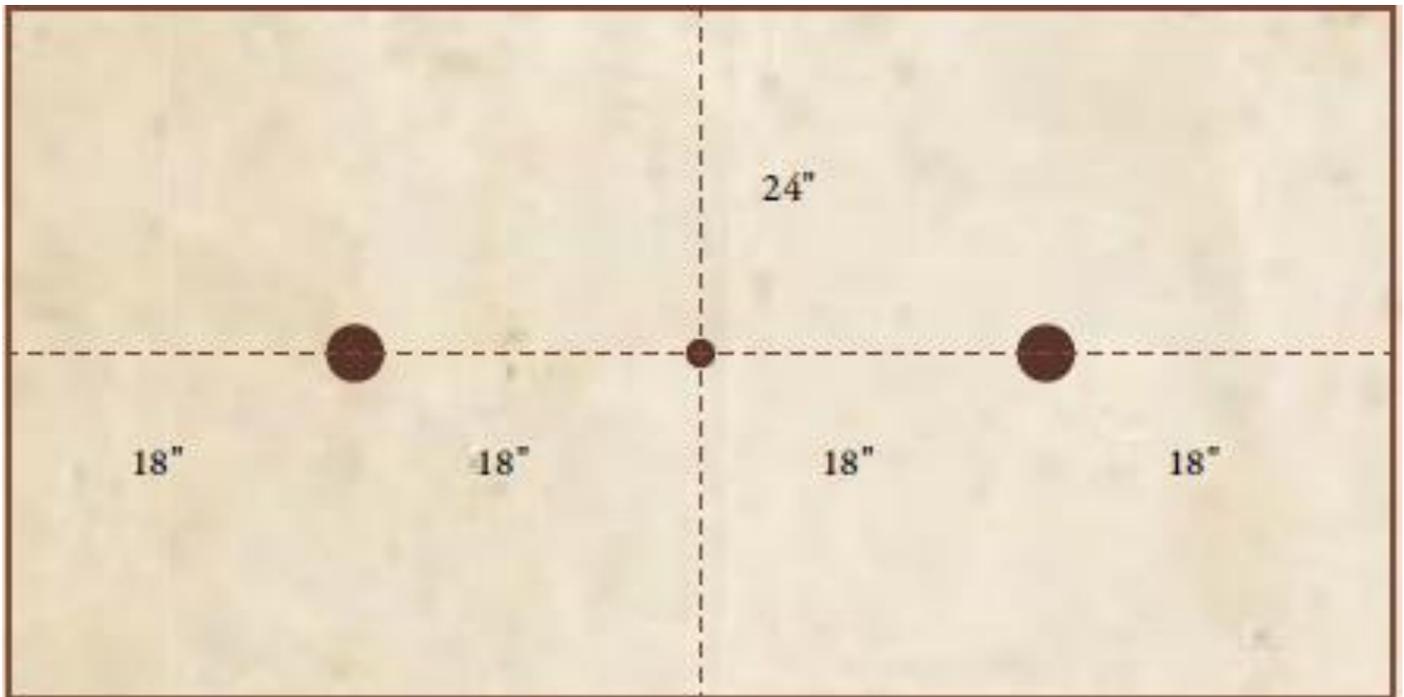
BATTLEFIELD

The battlefield should be 72" wide by 48" deep. It should be set up using the table setup guidelines from Appendix C. The city wall and gates are a small distance away from the table, this represents the plains surrounding the walls.

An objective zone 6" in diameter is placed in the center of the table. Two objective markers 12" in diameter are each placed 24" from the player's table edge and 18" from the side of the table.

GAME LENGTH

The game plays for a random game length, one player has been eliminated, or one player has conceded.



VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the end of each turn, players score points for the following:

- 1 point for securing the 6” center marker
- 2 points for securing each 12” objective marker
- 1 point for each secondary objective

SPECIAL RULES

Random Game Length – at the end of turn 6 and on, a player rolls a d6. The game continues if the result of that roll is a 2+. The game ends after ten turns otherwise.

Traitors – one unit in each army are turncoats, waiting for the right time to turn traitor. The army’s warlord and the regiment it is with are immune to this rule. Otherwise, for every other unit, when a player activates the regiment, they must roll 2D6. If the result is a 2, the regiment quits the battlefield.

Remove them as casualties and any character that was with them. If the result is a 12, the unit is now under the control of the opposing player. The regiment and character are treated as friendly units for that player and their activation card(s) should be represented in the player’s activation deck. (if this result is rolled, the opposing player may act with that regiment immediately, and then they may activate their next unit as normal)

Only one regiment per player will turn. Once a regiment has turned, no more traitor rolls need be made.

OUTCOME

Securing the plains near the main city gate will give control of the ruined city to the winning player. The winning player in the final battle may re-roll one failed reserve die per turn.



CHAPTER V

A KING'S BLADE



“From the ashes of the immortals to the steps of your forefathers, you are here this day because He alone commands it. He alone has carried you and lifted you up on high. He alone has put you on this path to put you in this place today. Today you will be anointed His most holy King of the Stornlands. You will be Alfred, first of his name, Defender of the North, and sword arm of our most beloved God on high!” The high priest Dio had said fiercely to Alfred, who had suffered a great wound to his side from the enemy and was being attended.

“If He commands it and is behind us, I shall certainly be the last to complain.” Alfred was reported to have said through clenched teeth as his surgeon stitched the wound as carefully as he could. The leather cuirass that Alfred had been wearing was ruined, and a retainer had been fetched to retrieve a spare.

The battle before the gates of the ruined capital had been mighty, but not conclusive. One more push was what it was going to take, and Alfred was not sure if his army had the numbers to finish the job. Dio was not convinced. Dio had been overtaken with religious fire and shook with the fervor of ancient warriors that he claimed called through him to direct, some would say plea, with Alfred to finish the effort that he had started and claim what was rightfully humanity's.

The spires forces had withdrawn into the ruin itself, and the field commanders under Alfred knew that battle within the fallen city itself would be the most challenging step of the journey remaining. Conventional battlefield tactics would not avail amid crumbling buildings and darkened alley ways.

Alfred's target was not just a military victory through normal means. With the ancient primordial shard pulsing with power, the final act of the play was set to begin. Writings told of a plaza near what had been the palace that had been constructed many long years before a king sat on the throne and when the imperial legions occupied the north. The plaza was constructed in such a way that the ravages of time were hardly said to have shown in its stonework, and the statues of long dead heroes watched over the people.

It was from here that kings were crowned, edicts were read, champions were made into heroes and soldiers knighted into the ranks of the most holy orders. It was from this plaza known as the Munus Crucible, or the Chamber of Birth, that a powerful stone known as the King Stone was set before a magnificent statue of a king that held its arms out as if in welcome.

This stone was said to have been blessed by Hazlia, and according to legend was part of that mad god's fiery tantrum that caused the cataclysm. Joining the primordial shard with the stone would cause a powerful connection that would, if the scholars were to be believed, purify all of the surrounding region with divine residue that would counteract the curse that the Shaper had laid before the land, and even perhaps rebuke the creature as well should he prove to be in the vicinity.

This stone was the key, and there was an entire army of clones standing in the way between Alfred and it. His army had to fight their way through the spires to reach the plaza and Alfred had to find a way to deliver the primordial shard to that stone. What was worse was that he had no real intelligence on how many spires forces remained in the city or around the city. His men had dwindled in number, and the spires had benefited from that loss as they had scavenged the dead to add to their own through hastily created drones that wore the faces of the dead humans.

There was not much that was certain in Alfred's camp in the hours leading up to the final assault on the ruins and on the spire forces within. The dream that the Stornlands could be ruled once more by a human king and where the church could spread the light and word of their God was held by both Alfred and by the priest Dio, for their purposes at that moment and for the duration of the military campaign had been in alignment.

To the men that followed, they were either following gold and silver, promises of land, or service under those chosen by God for that purpose to save their souls and cleanse their souls of human rot to prove that they were deserving of their God's favor.

Alfred knew that the men had to believe in something more than gold, more than promises of land, and more than mercenary desires. They had to believe in the fight itself and had to believe that what they were doing that day would echo throughout their legacies long after they had

passed from the world, for if they did not believe then Alfred felt it almost certain that their hearts and courage would not hold in the final moments of this last push.

That day had not been particularly noteworthy. Clouds marred most of the sky and a stiff breeze blew from the north carrying a hint of autumn with it. The ruins about the men whistled with it, adding a haunted atmosphere that only served to dampen the morale a little bit more with each passing moment.

The speech that Alfred gave his men was not recorded by any scribe, and as such no indication of what he had spoke exists in any of the history books that tell of the battle of Vur Burin. What is certain is that the pride and the valor that he spoke of that day, that truly manifested itself from his heart, was felt in each and every warrior that stood on the precipice of that ruined gate house.

Though bodies had been broken, swords had been blunted, and shields splintered, they had all been repaired and made whole again through grit and the determination to see this war through. As weapons were sharpened and shields mended, so too were bodies patched up and the fighting spirit restored.

The people of the south possessed something that the Spires may never understand, and that was the fierce and undying spirit that is carried by all humanity, and it is that divine spark that finally crept its way into the Shaper's own heart where he had begun to feel something that he had not felt in centuries: fear.

With a roar of defiance, that human army marched through those gates and into the unknown ruins that lay before them, and while the Spires forces aided by what was left of the ghoulish remnants of the mad king Sardis' long cursed court stood ready for them, many in their ranks pondered on whether or not their superiors had underestimated their enemy.

* * *

The Shaper and Irridius had their forces arrayed near the center of the ruined city. The biomancer worked fervently with the dead bodies that had been recovered from the battlefield from both sides, hastily trying to replenish his forces with quickly created drones. He had sent Oculus north to the spire to retrieve regiments of spare clones, but their arrival would not be sufficient, for the human army had gathered and prepared for their final push.

There was an emotion that the Shaper felt in those moments. An emotion that he had not felt in an exceedingly long time. That emotion was fear. The odds had ever been against the human army, and yet they continued to fight on. Their forces dwindled, while their dead were brought over as raw materials for the Shaper's forces, and still they continued to fight on. They had every terror and fear thrown at them, and yet they still-continued-to-fight-on.

Irridius' confidence and bravado had begun to falter as well. With treachery in his own ranks, the lineage high born had to worry not only about the human advances, but with the knife in the dark that his own wielded as well. The Shaper knew that Irridius only gave him part of his attention toward the war efforts, for his own skin and legacy was more important to him.

There were no more tricks for the Shaper to fall back on. The upcoming battle would likely decide the fate of the ruined city and would determine if the humans would succeed in creating a temporary kingdom over the bones of the fallen one. A loss here would not be the end of everything for the Spires forces that dwelled in what the humans called the Stornlands, though it would be a most inconvenient setback to the progress that had been wrought over the past one hundred and fifty years of study and resource gathering.

What the Shaper did not know was that the primordial shard that Alfred possessed could do much more damage to him than could possibly be dreamed in his most lurid nightmares. The shard was much more than just a piece of a primordial, and the King Stone much more than merely a human decoration.

The shard was a piece of the horseman War, and the humans' possession of it could do much more than simply turn a battle to their way. When combined with the King Stone, the shard's being would be amplified. It would serve not only as a catalyst to cleanse those that the insane god Hazlia had determined to be against him, it would provide a beacon calling out to the dweghom that a possession of theirs had been taken and that it had been located.

The dweghom arriving to the Stornlands would do much more than simply inconvenience the Shaper and his studies, it would destroy the region in another long and painful war that would ruin all involved.

However, the Shaper did not know these things. He did not truly understand that which Alfred possessed, and so they prepared to guard the perimeter of the throne, thinking that Alfred and his forces would attack there in an attack to claim a symbol, for the humans were often illogical and emotional in such matters.

Had Irridius been paying fully attention to his enemy, and not having to keep an eye on his back for betrayal, he may have noticed that the Shaper's lack of military tactical acumen could open up their flank to an attack should the human army not be pushing toward the throne. Irridius however had left the deployment of the remaining forces to the Shaper and to the biomancer's pheromancers, while he took time to address a more personal matter.

Cairnwaech's impudence had reached an offensive level, and the highborne could not allow his honor to be constantly besmirched. He gathered those of his cadre loyal to him and had them report any signs of treachery. Those loyal to him reported back that Cairnwaech had sought to usurp his position and claim his rank, though none backed her vocally.

It was time, Irridius felt, to eliminate the threat to his position and solidify to his avatara cadre who their commander was. Cairnwaech had been summoned forth, and knowing what was about to transpire, she arrived armed with her favored personal weapon: a metal staff of meteoric iron that had razor sharp blades on either end. She whirled the staff casually as Irridius and the rest of her regiment fell in around her, and felt a great sense of accomplishment and joy for if she won the ritual combat against the war marshal, she would be elevated to his rank and enjoy all that brought with it.

Irridius was an accomplished fighter. He had to be to have risen so high in the lineage and to have not only fended off other challengers to his position, but to have taken the position of those that had once been higher than he. Cairnwaech was obviously well trained as well, but she was nowhere near the equal of the war marshal. He had achieved his title not just through clever political machinations, but through decades of conflict, duels, and murder.

The duel between the war marshal and Cairnwaech started in a flurry as the upstart launched a dazzling array of attacks against him. Irridius quickly drew his dueling blade, and stayed on the defensive, parrying some blows and dodging others. Cairnwaech switched styles in an effort to throw Irridius off, but to no avail. The war master continued his parrying and dodging with practiced ease.

Several moments after the fight had begun, Cairnwaech's offensive flurry began to slow as she began to tire, and it was there that the war marshal ended her life with a simple back handed thrust that pushed his dueling blade through her throat.

Quickly withdrawing the blade, he flicked it to the side to spray Cairnwaech's blood off of the metal. With a look of stunned surprise on her face, she sank to her knees and as he began collapsing to the ground, Irridius wiped both edges of the dueling blade on her combat suit to clean it completely.

The duel had ended as quickly as it had begun and all present were reminded who their true leader was, and how effortlessly he had dispatched his latest challenger.

With Cairnwaech's blood pooling on the ancient crumbling tiles and her gurgling death rattle fading, Irridius took the moment to let his cadre soak in what had just happened, and let the weight of any treachery sit on each of their shoulders. His authority restored, Irridius had felt a swell of confidence and power welling from within.

"Does anyone else wish to lead this operation?" Irridius asked, stretching his arms out as an invitation to step forward. None answered him. Several lineage cadre looked to the ground or noticed a very interesting speck of dirt on their sleeve, but few dared look their war marshal in the eye. After a short pause for dramatic flair, Irridius smiled.

"Good, it would be a shame to waste anymore of our precious blood staining these gaudy stones. Get to your posts and activate your avatara. We have some primitives to crush under our heel and remind who in fact rules this world."

And the human army did come in an array of holy fire, steel, and heavy metal. Though their armor was rent, blackened, and torn, and their weapons were burred with the previous battle's scars, they pushed on for one final act. Alfred was at their fore, his sword raised high in the air and the primordial shard gleaming in the daylight.

It was then that the presence of the horseman War, carried into battle unknowingly by Alfred the Black, the would-be king of the Stornlands, was felt by man and clone alike, and much blood would be spilled upon those ancient stone streets.

STORNLANDS SCENARIO V BEHOLD THE FRUITS OF WAR

Alfred takes what remains of his army and makes a final surge toward an ancient plaza where the King Stone lies, in an effort to join it with the Primordial Shard that he carries. Unbeknownst to him, this shard is a fraction of the essence of the Horseman known as War, and by setting the actions of that day into motion he unleashes a force that cannot be contained which is the price for the king's victory.

ARMIES

Full armies of up to 2,000 points are used in this scenario from both sides.

BATTLEFIELD

The battlefield should be 72" wide by 48" deep. This battle takes place within a ruined city. There should be a good number of ruined buildings. Some can be garrisonable, but the defense values of these buildings should not be greater than a 1. Piles of rubble are also prominent which are impassable or are hindering zonal terrain.

GAME LENGTH

The game plays for 10 turns.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the end of each turn, players score points for the following:

- 1 point for each card removed from the command deck
- 2 points for removing the warlord from the command deck (does not stack)
- 1 point for each secondary objective

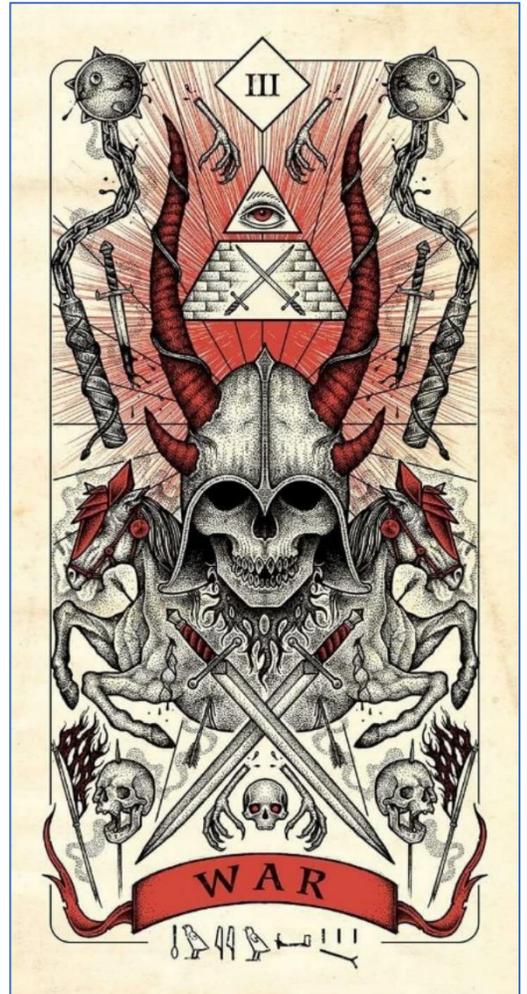
SPECIAL RULES

War Without End – Mainstay regiments that are removed from the table may recycle and come back on following the rules for Reserves in the following turn. Characters are not regiments and do not recycle.

Horsemen are Drawing Nearer – The effect of the Horseman War is felt keenly in this battle. Each regiment benefits from the Horseman's Fury special rule. This rule works just like Fury but can also stack with Fury (so a unit with Fury would gain +2 attacks per stand instead of +1)

OUTCOME

This battle represents Alfred's final push to the King Stone. The victor of this battle receives a bonus +50 points to the final scenario.



KILL THE KING – THE KING IS DEAD

I AM THE KING – LONG LIVE THE KING

Pushing into the Munus Crucible, Alfred and his spearhead must break through the remaining spires forces standing before the King Stone and unite his sword with the stone.

MODELS NEEDED

This is a heroic skirmish. Both sides field 300 points total and both sides must include their campaign warlord as their character. The winner of the fifth battle receives a bonus +50 points.

BATTLEFIELD

The Battlefield is 48” x 48” and represents the Munus Crucible, which is a ruined plaza bordered with statuary and pillars. In the center of the plaza, 12” from the Spires deployment zone, sits the King Stone. The King Stone is essentially an ornate rock or chunk of rubble of some type that is impassable. Assorted rubble should be scattered about the battlefield, representing light cover and hindering terrain.

OBJECTIVES

Alfred must come into base contact with the King Stone and not be engaged in melee with an enemy at the end of a turn. If this condition is met, Alfred unites the stone and the sword, ending the war and scattering what is left of the spire forces. If Alfred falls and fails his injury roll and succumbs, the war is lost for his side.

DEPLOYMENT

Forces come on to the table per the normal skirmish rules. The spires player may place up to three mainstay infantry models within 12” of their deployment zone before the game begins.

SPECIAL RULES

He is the One: Alfred (or the equivalent warlord if using other forces) is bathed in the light of the Horseman War. As such, slaying him is a fairly difficult task. Alfred’s (or the equivalent warlord) Resolve score in this battle is 6. Additionally, when taking injury rolls, Alfred (or the equivalent warlord) is never affected by the number of injury tokens they have accumulated, effectively meaning they will only fail the injury roll by rolling a 6.



The Old Magic Burns: the power emanating from the King Stone is toxic to the spires, for it countermands their biomancy. All spires models, with the exception of their warlord, receive the Decay 1 rule if they begin the turn within 6” of the King Stone.



Behold the Red Rider
For upon his tread
Lies fire, blood, and death
He is War
And kingdoms fall at his gaze

Alfred went down to a knee. The blow dealt to him by the faceless clone in front of him was staggering, and he grit his teeth against the pain as it swelled throughout his being. All around him, his soldiers were falling. The spires forces had been hurt, but they had regrouped and counter-attacked at the King Stone at precisely the right moment for them, and Alfred's forces were exhausted.

A misshapen creature loped to where Alfred struggled to regain his feet. Once a man, now a slaving beast with jagged teeth and a long purple tongue that hung out of its mouth, the creature wore a tarnished crown set into the filth on its face. Alfred was face to face with Sardis, the old King of the Stornlands, and his ancestor.

"Yes, to your knees you must go yes. Bow to the masters, serve the masters and live." The creature said. Alfred looked to the ground, droplets of his own blood spattering on the cold stone flagstones from his wounds. The clone that dealt him the blow twirled its bone blade twice and leveled it at Alfred's head, ready for the command to end the human king and end the battle.

"Yes human, bow down. Resign your army to my mercy and you will live. Serve me and you will live, and I will give you all that you need. It is the only logical way. Even your primitive brain should be able to comprehend that you are defeated here." The Shaper said in a matter-of-fact monotone voice, slowly walking toward Alfred. His voluminous robes billowed in the wind, the cracking of the cloth accenting his voice.

"It is the only way, yes it is." The twisted creature mumbled, a drool-slick falling from its mouth. "Join us and the masters will be generous."

Alfred closed his eyes for a moment, as the last of his warriors were taken down. He was so close to the King Stone that he could feel its presence, and the shard in the hilt of his sword had begun to illuminate a phosphorescent green. It would be death then.

The sword swung up in a lethal arc, taking the ancient king's head from its wretched shoulders. The Shaper took a step back, momentarily stunned at what seemed like the most illogical of decisions that the human could have made. As the blade finished its arc, Alfred brought it down in time to parry the bone blade of the clone. The energized steel cleaved through the clone's sword, shattering it.

There was a space between the clone and the Shaper where the King Stone sat, and Alfred took his chance. Driving his exhausted legs forward, he ducked the outstretched arms of the clone and reached out and drove the blade of his sword into the stone.

The weapon turned as white as the sun and the stone itself was filled with an otherworldly light. Ancient writings glowed on the surface of the well-worn King Stone as a brilliant wave of power erupted from it.

"No..." was all the Shaper was able to utter before his form was blasted back by the primordial power. Half of his face was vaporized in an instant and half of his body became a molten ruin.

The king had returned to the Stornlands.

EPILOGUE

History records that Alfred, first of his name, successfully drove his army north and with the help of the high priest Dio, confronted and defeated the Spires in what was later penned as the beginning of the Northern Wars.

While never a substantial fighter in his own right, Alfred gained a warrior's spirit after his victory. Whether this came as a natural side from winning a war and claiming a throne in its own right, or whether that had been planted by the influence of the horseman War, none could say. Indeed, the origin of the shard or what it really was a part of never became public knowledge or was even known until much later in the story.

The Shaper's forces were heavily destroyed and lost with the release of the primordial energy from within the King Stone. The biomancer himself was almost killed, his body now a twisted ruin. He was plucked from the battle by one of his pheromancers and they made good their escape.

Iridius as well-managed to escape the field. His avatara was heavily damaged, but salvageable. Most of the avatara cadre were lost during the King Stone's awakening. The feedback from the energy not only destroyed the war engines themselves, but for many connected from the mind controlling them, the energy was such that it scrambled their brains as well.

The Directorate was furious at the embarrassment. Decades of development had been lost and to top off matters and make them worse, the King Stone and the essence of War had been as a beacon sent out across the region. That winter would see the first of the dweghom scouting bands braving the ice and snow to determine its origin for they coveted the remnants of War above most all things.

Vur Burin's walls were repaired over the fall, and shipments of grain and other supplies sent by the church to the northern city. With its location along the river, it made an excellent commerce trading port, and all were optimistic that it would regain the status that it once had so long ago.

The church, eager to begin spreading their tenants of faith, began the repair and elaboration of the old temple. Not content to merely repair it, no expense was spared in it being made into a glorious and fastidious monument of the faith.

Alfred himself was crowned the king in the north on the steps of the very plaza that he had won the war on, before the King Stone. His sword was still sheathed in that stone, and none were fit to remove it though many had tried. The primordial shard, that essence of War, had fused metal with stone, and that blade had become the center of much talk and tales which served to draw even more people north to see it for themselves.

That winter, Alfred's court would be visited by the dweghom scouts, and their interest in the sword sheathed within the King Stone would prove to ignite the next chapter in the Northern Wars.

But that tale, as they say, is for another time...

AFTERWORD

I have been writing campaigns and different campaign rulesets for a very long time. It has become kind of the hobby within the hobby for me. It allows me to dive deep into the game's lore and immerse myself in the world in a way that you cannot really do just casually playing it. For me, the lore and the game world are equally as important as intuitive and immersive rules that make me feel like I am commanding a legitimate fantasy army.

When the Stornlands started, it was just a random kingdom set in some abstract place. We really had no game world to put it in, no maps, no geographical information. We just knew that the Hundred Kingdoms was made up of a bunch of small kingdoms and gave a lot of creative leeway to putting a kingdom really wherever we wanted to put it.

Here the game has been out over a year now, we have a Companion that has detailed the genesis of the world, and we have had quite a bit of information leaked out through short stories and articles about what this new world might look like, and it has been very exciting.

So I took a stab at writing a narrative campaign set in my fantasy kingdom, the Stornlands. Its been an exciting journey of discovery for me to begin fleshing out what this kingdom is and where it began. More exciting is the fact that this kingdom has really just begun, much like the game and the world of Ea has just begun, so the possibilities of where it goes from here are endless.

Writing rules for campaigns can be a long process, but when including an entire narrative framework behind that set of rules, the process gets even longer and more involved. Covid 19 has driven us all into our houses and away from our gaming tables in 2020, but one positive has been that it has given the time for a project like this to take root and to be created and published via the internet and the Underspire.

There were many challenges in getting the narrative right, as there are still as of this writing a lot of pieces of information that we are missing in regards to how things work in the lore, and those missing pieces are said to be revealed in all good time. What we have here is a work that is based off of my own translation of what we know about the world into a story that may need revisited later when we learn more.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and to tread in the Stornlands with me. Here's to many more years of adventuring in Ea and the Lost Kingdoms.

~Auticus

September 2020

APPENDIX A

NOTABLE PERSONALITIES

The Stornlands contains a few notable characters that have their own personalities and background. Of the characters presented, Alfred the Black, the would-be king of the Stornlands and the Shaper both have unique rules.

These characters may be used throughout the campaign, but if they are chosen they must be your warlord for your respective side. Special characters may not have their gear or retinues or masteries changed, nor may they gain honors or campaign upgrades.

Use of these characters outside of this campaign would require your opponent's permission.



Alfred the Black



Alfred, the pursuant king of the Stornlands, is the descendant of Sardis who was the last ruling king of the land until the curse of the Shaper took hold and transformed the population into either harvestable bio matter or slaving ghoulish creatures that could neither live nor die.

Upon learning of his ancestry, Alfred took what funds he had gathered as a young man and invested it all into his family's trade business. While traveling the kingdoms, his investments proved fruitful and he began buying information on the northlands, the curse, and relics that could help him reclaim his heritage.

Though not a great fighter in his own right, Alfred was taught the basics of soldiery by his mercenaries.

Alfred wields the Storm Blade, a relic from the Old Dominion that was carried into battle by a heroic legendary guardian and to whom Alfred has read much on and carries a great deal of respect for. Set within this blade is a pale green rhombus which was reported to be a primordial shard.

This little stone was to be the keystone of Alfred's success, but it was also more than the man bargained for, as it was a tiny sliver of one of the Horsemen, the Red Rider War. That piece of information would not be revealed to him in this story however, that is the tale for another time.

The stats and rules given for Alfred are for both the dormant shard and the awakened shard, which can be accomplished by winning Chapter 2 in the campaign.

Alfred the Black **Medium Infantry: 105 (unawakened) / 130 (awakened) Points**

M	V	C	A	W	R	D	E
5	1	2	5	4	4	3	0

Storm Blade (unawakened): Cleave 1

Storm Blade (awakened): Cleave 2, Fearsome, Alfred and the regiment he is with gain Fury

Special Rules: Unique, Character (counts as Noble Lord for regiment and item bonuses), Leadership Aura – all regiments from Alfred's warband within 12" of him may use his Resolve.

Retinues: Alfred is accompanied into battle by his most loyal mercenary retainers. These former remnants of the imperial legion grant Alfred an Evasion score of 3 if he is engaged in a duel.

Supremacy Ability: Stand your Ground! For the duration of the turn, Alfred's entire army automatically passes any Resolve roll required.

The Shaper



The Shaper has been a cornerstone of the Directorate’s operation in the northern theater. His studies on the transformation of the human specimen from its default flesh and blood status to a homogenous fungus that bears the same dna fingerprints though in a much more docile and easy to harvest form has been paramount to their future plans of providing an easily made and replicateable fuel source which can be used to power not only clones but other intricate machinery with additional applications beyond just the scope of warfare and terrestrial terra-forming.

It is no surprise with the success of the Shaper’s experimentation that the Lineage has direct interest in the results of those studies as well as working samples both from their clone forces as well as their construction and labor pools. The Directorate, wishing to placate the Lineage, have readily supplied them with the samples and fruits of the Shaper’s experimentation, winning the Shaper’s spire the presence of lineage soldiers and avatars who have been assigned to the biomancer to protect their investment.

As a biomancer, the Shaper is well-adapted to the life sciences that have made the spires famous. He long ago eschewed any desire to remain a part of exile culture, instead preferring to spend his time among his clones, pheromancers, and his experiments. He was given the name “Shaper” for his proficiency at crafting and rebending flesh and bone to his whim with such skill that he has no equal among his peers.

He has even performed grafts and enhancements to his own body as proof of his confidence and progress. His eye was removed and replaced with the main Oculus, a device that allows him to stay connected to his network of spies and agents. His frame has been augmented by reinforced bone, and he has enhanced his body’s need for oxygen by implanting a mechanical lung capable of breath in even the vacuum of space or under the water.

The Shaper Light Infantry: 155 points

M	V	C	A	W	R	D	E
6	2	2	2	4	4	3	2

Special Rules: Character, Unique, counts as Biomancer for regiment and item bonuses

Tier 3 Mastery of Flesh – (reference Spires army list for these benefits) - additionally the Shaper may select both Biomancy and Pheromancy abilities

Augmented Frame: The hardened internal skeleton boosts the Shaper’s Defense (included)

Supremacy Ability: Augmented Decay. Every enemy regiment on the battlefield rolls 2 dice. For each roll of a 5 or a 6 that regiment suffers D6 wounds (no defense rolls allowed). Casualties suffered from this do not cause Morale Tests. This is resolved at the end of the Shaper’s activation.

Sardis, the Undying King and his Feral Hunters



Sardis was the last king of the Stornlands. As many kings have done across Ea, Sardis made a deal with the spires to gain longer life in exchange for the very lives of his subjects. In Sardis' case, the lives of the first-born children born in the Stornlands.

When Sardis and his new queen had their first child, the king attempted to cheat the Shaper of the tax that was due. That attempt

cost him his kingdom and all of his subjects, as the Shaper unleashed a terrible engineered spore-virus that transformed most of his subjects into pliant fungus, capable of reproducing but unable to do anything else and providing the spire lord with all of the bio mass that he required to continue his studies.

For Sardis and for his officials, sheriffs, landowners, and heads of state, the Shaper spared them from the fate of the common people and instead gifted them all with eternal life. An eternal life bereft of the pleasures of living. Food, water, touch, nothing was felt anymore and over time this drove them all mad and turned them all into twisted creatures that were parodies of their former selves.

Running on all fours like animals, these twisted creatures hate all things living for their jealousy and envy burns hot and they seek to extinguish any life that they come across and feast upon it in their vain hope that they may once again taste the blood and flesh that they succor.

Sardis the Undying King **Light Infantry: 115 points** **May be taken in spire-aligned armies**

M	V	C	A	W	R	D	E
6	1	3	5	5	4	1	3

Special Rules: Character, Unique, Cleave(1), Deadly Blades, Fearsome, Flurry

Regiments: Feral Hunters (mainstay)

Feral Hunters **Light Infantry: 115 points**

M	V	C	A	W	R	D	E
6	1	2	1	1	2	1	1

Special Rules: Fearsome, Flurry, Fluid Formation

Stands: 3

Models Per Stand: 3

Cost Per Extra Stand: 35 points per stand

APPENDIX B

EXPERIENCE AND UPGRADES

As units fight on the battlefield and experience both victories and defeats, they gain upgrades to reflect their prowess on the battlefield.

A unit that is upgraded is considered a *Veteran Unit*. Units that are upgraded may never field more stands than they had during the battle when they were upgraded. Veteran Units cost an additional 10% in points to field. (For example, if a veteran unit normally cost 100 points, it would cost 110 points to field).

Units may only ever have one veteran unit upgrade.

A Veteran Unit that is completely destroyed loses their veteran status.

If a Unit rolls an ability that they already possess, the player may re-roll the result until an ability that they do not have is gained.

Gaining Experience

At the end of a battle, each player may nominate a unit that has survived the battle and roll on the upgrade chart.

Veteran Unit Upgrades (max 1 per unit)

2D6	Description
2	Drilled – The unit has become experts at maneuver and gain the Fluid Formation special rule
3	Tip of the Spear – The unit has become a feared forward element, gaining the Linebreaker special rule.
4	Defensive Training – The unit has trained with their weapons to negate enemy attacks, gaining the Parry special rule.
5	Deadly Repute – The unit has earned a reputation and gains the Fearsome special rule.
6	Well Disciplined – The unit increases its Resolve score by 1.
7	Combat Training – The unit increases their effectiveness in combat through drills and field exercises. You may increase either their Clash or their Volley score by 1.
8	Stalwart – The unit has seen it all. It gains the Fearless special rule.
9	Monster Hunter – this unit gains the Fiend Hunter special rule
10	Assassins – the unit gains the Deadly Blades special rule
11	Masterwork Weaponry – The unit gains +1 to their Cleave value (if they do not have Cleave, then they have the Cleave(1) special rule)
12	Flurry – The unit has become expertly attuned to their weapons, and strike their enemies with deadly precision, gaining the Flurry special rule.

HEROIC UPGRADES

Heroes, like units, can earn experience on the battlefield and can gain upgrades to reflect their newfound abilities. Unlike a unit, a hero may take up to THREE upgrades. Like a veteran unit, every upgrade that a hero takes increases their point cost by 10% of the base cost. Additionally, for every upgrade that a hero possesses, they are worth a bonus victory point.

As a character advances, he gains the appropriate title befitting his new status.

- 1 upgrade – Veteran (+10% of model base cost, +1 bonus victory point)
- 2 upgrades – Paragon (+20% of model base cost, +2 bonus victory points)
- 3 upgrades – Legend (+30% of model base cost, +3 bonus victory points)

Heroes may never possess the same upgrade more than once. If an upgrade rolled grants the character an ability that they already possess, the player may re-roll until a result is obtained that the character does not have. If an upgrade rolled grants the character a bonus to an ability that they do not have (for example +1 volley but the character does not wield ranged weapons) they may re-roll. The point of the upgrade system is not to offer up skills that cannot be used.

Gaining Experience

At the end of a battle, a player may nominate a single *surviving* character for an upgrade so long as it achieved one of the following tasks:

- Slayed another hero in a duel
- Was a part of a unit that destroyed an enemy unit either through missile fire or in a clash
- Is not a special named character. These may never gain upgrades.

Injuries and Death

If a character is slain in a duel or through his unit being destroyed during the battle, after the battle has concluded roll a die for each slain character. On the roll of a 6, the character is permanently slain. Any upgrades that they had are lost.

On the roll of a 5, the character is injured but will survive. They lose an upgrade and will miss the next game as they recover.

On the roll of a 1-4 the character recovers with no negative effects and can fight in the next battle.

Note that if a character has the ability to re-roll INJURY rolls, that does NOT apply to this!

HEROIC UPGRADE TABLES

To upgrade a character, roll a D6.

Table A (1-2)

<i>D6</i>	Description
1	Swordsman - The character gains +1 to their Clash score
2	Marksman - The character gains +1 to their Volley score
3	Opportunist - The character gains +1 to their Attack score
4	Fortitude - The character gains +1 to their Wound score
5	Masterwork Armor - The character gains +1 to their Defense score
6	Resolute - The character gains +1 to their Resolve score

Table B (3-4)

<i>D6</i>	Description
1	Dodgy - Character ignores the first wound allocated to him each turn
2	Evasive - Character gains +1 to their Evasion score
3	Power Attack - Character gains +1 to either their Cleave or Armor-Piercing (player picks)
4	Killing Blow - Character can re-roll any failed injury rolls during the battle
5	Sure Defense - Character can re-roll defense rolls of 6
6	Swift - The character and the unit that he is attached to gain +1 Movement

Table C (5-6)

<i>D6</i>	Description
1	Stalwart - The regiment that the character is attached to gains the Fearless special rule
2	Deadly Repute - The regiment that the character is attached to gains the Fearsome special rule
3	Dug In - The regiment that the character is attached to gains the Bastion draw event
4	Bold - The regiment that the character is attached to always counts as being <i>Inspired</i>
5	Vengeful - The regiment that the character is attached to gains the Fury draw event
6	Herald of Doom - The regiment that the character is attached to gains the Aura of Death special rule

APPENDIX C

SETTING UP THE TABLE

The Stornlands is a harsh land, comprising rocky hillsides, scrub, evergreen forests, icy cold creeks, majestic cliffs, and the ruined remains of an empire long past into shadow.

The point of battling on the tabletop is to create a landscape that is believable and gives a good game without becoming too overbearing.

This section shows how to randomly generate the terrain for a Stornlands battle set in the default wilderness. If your province has a different landscape than the default, adjust the features of your table accordingly.

Number of Pieces of Terrain

Each 2x2 section of the table has between 0 and 2 pieces of terrain. Simply roll a D3 and subtract one from the result. This means that on a 4x4 table, you will have between 0 and 8 pieces of terrain, and a 6x4 table would have between 0 and 12 pieces.

For each piece of terrain to be generated, roll 2D6 and consult the chart below.

<i>2D6</i>	Terrain
2	Deep River – should have a beginning and end point on the table. Can cross multiple tiles but counts as a piece of terrain in one 2x2 section. For every 2x2 section of battlefield it is on, there should be a crossing point of some kind that can accommodate a stand wide at the minimum. Deep Rivers are Water terrain and count as Very Dangerous Terrain. Crossing points only count as Hindering.
3	Impassable Terrain – a piece of terrain that cannot be passed through such as a cliff or spire or an icy lake.
4	Difficult Ground – a patch of broken ground, such as boulders or jagged stone or thorns and briars. Counts as Broken Ground.
5	Steep Hill or Marsh – a hill that is difficult to climb that counts as Hindering Terrain or marshy terrain that counts as Hindering Terrain.
6	Forest – a stand of trees that is obscuring and additionally counts as Hindering Terrain.
7	Forest or Hill – counts as either a Forest or a Hill (player choice)
8	Hill – an elevated position.
9	Obstacles – hedges or ruined fences that were once a part of a farmstead. They count as Hindering Terrain and additionally as Obscuring terrain.
10	Intact Building – a structure that can be garrisoned. Can be a tower, a barracks, or even an abandoned farmhouse. The building's capacity will vary depending on what is in your collection but has Defense (2).
11	Ruins – ruined structure that is similar to a building only in worse condition. It grants Defense (1) for garrisoning.
12	Shallow River – functions identically to a Deep River except counts as Dangerous Terrain.

APPENDIX D

SKIRMISH RULES

Stornlands Skirmish is a simple set of skirmish rules created to go hand in hand with the main Conquest game. However, it also tries to take advantage of the lower model count, and thus uses a slightly different dice mechanic (2d6 instead of a d6). The same principals from the game apply.

TURN SEQUENCE

- Supremacy Phase – surviving leader's may use a supremacy ability if the supremacy power has not yet been used during the game.
- Check For Route. If more than 50% of the number of starting models at the beginning of the game are slain, each remaining model must make a Resolve roll. If it passes, they fight on. If it fails, the model flees the battlefield and is removed.
- Roll for initiative. The player with the least number of models may add +1/-1 to the roll. Player with highest value goes first.
- Light Action Phase – players take it in turns to alternate between activating light models. One player will activate a single model. Then their opponent will activate a single model. If one player runs out of light models, the opposing player continues until all their light models are activated.
- Medium Action Phase – same as light only with medium models
- Heavy Action Phase – same as light only with heavy models
- Scoring Phase – players check the scoring objectives for the game and apply any results that the scenario dictates.
- Injury Phase – players will roll for each model that is injured and laid down to determine if it can get up and fight on or if it succumbs to its injuries.

Important Note: there are no reserve rolls in skirmish. The entire force arrives on the first turn. With such a smaller model count, keeping everyone's forces together instead of randomly arriving is important.

MODELS & CHARACTERISTICS

Models are independent and act independently. There are no concepts of a UNIT in this ruleset.

Stornlands Skirmish uses a 2d6 system and alters the stat block of the primary game a bit. To determine the skirmish characteristics, you will change Clash, Volley, Defense, Evasion, and Resolve scores; cross reference it with the chart below:

Existing Conquest Score	Skirmish Characteristic Score
1	4
2	5
3	7
4	8
5	9
6	10

The March (M) characteristic remains the same and remains the characteristic to determine how far a model can move (in inches).

Volley (V) – serves as a measure of the model’s ability with missile weapons.

Clash (C) – describes how effective a model is in melee.

Attacks (A) – tells how many attack rolls a model receives when attacking an enemy.

Wounds (W) – tells how many damaging blows a model can stand before it is Injured.

Resolve (R) – the measure of the model’s courage and willingness to fight on when the battle turns against them.

Defense (D) – the measure of physical resilience, combining protection from armor with the model’s innate toughness.

Evasion (E) – a secondary defensive character that takes into account a model’s ability to ignore harm through agility, resilience, or magical protection.

DIE ROLLS

Unless otherwise altered, all die rolls in skirmish are 2d6 based. You will roll 2D6 and add the result together and compare it to a target score. If the roll is equal to or less than the target score you will have succeeded. Otherwise, you will have failed.

LINE OF SIGHT

To verify if a model can draw line of sight to something, simply trace a line from any part of the model's base touching its front arc to any part of the target's base. If nothing interrupts that line, it can see the target. Some pieces of terrain may be seen through, such as fences or light wood stands. Where that is the case, it should be made known that it does not block line of sight before your game begins.

Infantry models are blocked by all other models unless they are on a higher position such as a hill. Infantry are said to be 1 level high or Size 1.

Brutes and Cavalry can see over infantry, and infantry can see Brutes and Cavalry over other infantry. Brutes and Cavalry are said to be 2 levels high or Size 2.

Monsters can see over Brutes and Cavalry, and as such Brutes and Cavalry and Infantry can see them as well. Monsters are said to be 3 levels high or Size 3.

Elevated terrain helps models see other models over intervening models or terrain. Elevated terrain should be clarified before your game begins as to what level it elevates.

Example: a hill used in a game may be said to be Size 2. This means any models on the hill add 2 to their size to determine line of sight. Therefore, an infantry model would count as Size 3 when trying to draw line of sight, and could see over intervening infantry or brute/cavalry models that were on the ground level.

Model's Facing Arcs



In the above illustration we have a Man-At-Arms. He is facing the direction of the arrow. The red line bisects his base. Everything to the front of that line is the model's "front" arc. Everything behind it is his "rear" arc.

ACTIONS

Models receive two actions per activation. Other than a march, no other action may be chosen twice in the same activation.

- March (Out-of-Combat) – the model may move up to its March Characteristic in inches, or half of its March Characteristic if it is prone
- Go Prone (Out-Of-Combat) – the model goes from standing to prone
- Stand – the model goes from prone to standing.
- Charge (Out-of-Combat) – allows a model to move into contact with an enemy to engage in melee.
- Aim (Out-of-Combat) – the model receives a +1 to its Volley score for its next Volley Action this turn.
- Volley (Out-of-Combat) – this action allows the model to shoot an enemy model.
- Inspire (Combat) – the model receives a +1 to its Clash score for its next Clash Action this turn.
- Clash (Combat) – allows the model to strike blows against enemy models in base to base contact
- Withdraw (Combat) – allows the model to disengage from close-combat with enemy models.
- Cast Spells – models that have the ability to cast spells may use this action to cast a spell (in or out of combat)

MARCH

Marching allows a model to move around the table. A model may never move further than its march distance.

A model may move through friendly unengaged models but can never end its move on top of another model.

A model may never move through an enemy model.

A model may never move off of the battlefield.

A model that is Prone may only move half of its march distance.

A model must always end its March at least 1" away from an enemy model.

Climbing & Jumping

A model may use its March characteristic to climb a surface vertically. A model may use its March characteristic to jump horizontal distance. A model may use two march movements to climb but may not use two march movements to jump unless the model has been able to land at the end of the first jump.

A model may end its turn while climbing. However, if a model is struck with any attacks it will fall (see falling for more on those rules).

Example: A model has a 5 March characteristic. It may jump over a hole that is 4" wide as it can clear 5" with a jump. It could jump over two holes that were 4" wide so long as there was a landing platform at 5" for it to land on after the first jump. It could not jump over a 9" wide hole as there is no where for the model to land, and it can only clear 5" with a jump.

Falling

If a model falls for whatever reason, measure the vertical distance that it falls from where it starts to where it ends up. Ignoring the first 3", every 3" that the model falls it will suffer an automatic hit (roll defense or evasion as normal). Reference the following table to determine results.

Fall Distance	Number of Hits	Defense Penalty
Up to 5"	0	0
6-8"	1	0
9-11"	2	-1
12-14"	3	-2
15-17"	4	-3
18"+	5	-4

Entering the Battlefield

Models enter the battlefield from their starting table edge. They come in as if they were standing on the very edge.

GO PRONE

Only Infantry and Brutes may elect to voluntarily go prone.

The model uses its action to lay down. Place the model on their front. Prone models may only move one half of their movement during a March action.

Models that are Prone count as being one size smaller than they normally are. Infantry models would therefore be considered size 0, while brutes would be size 1.

Models that are Prone may not issue an Inspire action, nor a Withdraw action.

Models that are Prone count all strikes against them as if they were to the Back Arc.

Models that are Prone fight with a -2 penalty to their Clash and grant a further +1 bonus to enemy models striking them in melee combat. Prone models are at -2 penalty to be shot at if they are Infantry, or -1 penalty to be shot at if they are Brutes.

STAND

The model uses its action to stand up from a Prone position.

CHARGE

The Charge Action is the only way a model can move into base contact with an enemy model. When Declaring a charge, the model must have line of sight to its target, and the model must have not entered the battlefield that turn. **A model may only target an enemy model to charge.**

To charge, a model will roll a single D6 and add it to their March Characteristic. If the value meets or exceeds the distance from the model to its target, the charge is successful. If the value does not meet or exceed the distance, the charge is failed, and the model must move forward a number of inches equal to the value rolled on the D6.

Charges must follow a straight line except where needing to move around impassable terrain, combats, or anything else that cannot be moved through.

Charges must always end up in the same facing arc that they were in at the beginning of the charge. If it is not possible to contact with the same facing arc that the model is in at the beginning of the charge, a charge is not possible.

A model can be physically positioned in both arcs at once, but if this is the case it will count as being engaged in the model's Front Arc.

Models may charge through unengaged friendly models so long as they do not end their charge in contact with the friendly model.

Models that have charged count as Inspired on the turn that they charged.

Impact Hits

Medium and Heavy Cavalry/Brutes, and Medium and Heavy Monsters inflict Impact Hits. Other special rules may exist to also inflict Impact Hits, and where those are true, they will be denoted by the model.

Impact hits are resolved after a successful Charge Action and are resolved exactly like Strikes during a Clash.

Charging Multiple Models

It may be that charging a single model is not possible. Where it is possible, you must charge in a straight line and target a single model. However, there are times when contacting a single model is not possible, such as if a brute or cavalry model is charging infantry that are close together due to the difference in base sizes.

When contacting a single model is not possible, it is acceptable for a model to charge multiple enemy models. However, models coming into contact with multiple enemies do not count as Inspired.

VOLLEY

When a model takes a Volley Action it will shoot a weapon that it has that contains the Barrage keyword. The number following Barrage indicates how many shots may be fired.

To choose a target, the model must be able to draw Line of Sight. Line of Sight is covered above in previous section.

Next, the target must be in range of the Barrage. A target that is out of range may not be fired upon.

Check for Cover

Models within zonal terrain that grants cover (such as forests), behind linear obstacles like fences, or within fortifications of some type receive cover.

Light Cover – foliage, shrubbery, light wooden fencing, and forests would count as light cover. Models within Light Cover would have a -1 penalty to be shot at.

Heavy Cover – stone walls and solid constructions would count as heavy cover. Models within Heavy Cover would have a -2 penalty to be shot at.

Partially Obscured – models that are partially behind some type of obstacle (another model, a structure, etc) where only part of the base is visible are said to be partially obscured. This counts as light cover (-1 penalty to be shot at). If the model is larger than the target (or vice versa) this is not counted.

Check for Long Range

Short Range is a value up to half of a model's total range. Anything GREATER THAN half of a model's total range is considered Long Range.

Models that are at Long Range have a -1 penalty to be shot at.

Check for Melee Combat

Firing into Melee combat is a dangerous thing. If the target model is engaged with an enemy, there is a -2 penalty to shoot at it. Any hits must be randomized between the combatants in the melee to see which model was truly struck.

Roll to Hit

For each shot, roll 2D6. Adjust the model's Volley Score by any penalties that needs to be applied for cover or range (or anything else that the scenario may call for). For each roll of 2d6, for each score that is equal to or less than the Volley Score, the model has scored a HIT.

On the Edge

If a target model is on the edge of a cliff or other high place where they can fall, then they must roll a D6 for every hit that they take. On the roll of a 1, they fall (see falling).

A model is considered "on the edge" if their base is within 2" of an edge.

Roll Defense

For every HIT that was rolled, next the target player will roll 2D6 and compare it with their Defense Characteristic, adjusting the Defense by the appropriate Armor Piercing value as needed.

For every score rolled that is equal to or less than this adjusted Defense Score, the model has been saved from injury. For every score that exceeds this Defense Score, the model has taken a wound!

Evasion

If the Evasion Score is higher than the modified Defense Score, then the Evasion Score may be used in its place. Note the Evasion Score is never modified.

Injuries

When a model's Wound Score has been taken down to 0, it is said to be Injured. This does not necessarily mean the model is out for good however, for at the end of the turn all injured models roll to see if they succumb to their wounds or not.

For every HIT that strikes a model from the point its wounds drop to 0 (to include the strike that removed the last remaining wound of the model), place a token next to the model. This affects the Injury roll that the model will have to make later in the turn. Additionally, place the model Prone and laying on its back. This is the indicator that an injury roll will need to be made at the end of the turn.

For models that are already at 0 wounds, there is no defense roll made. If they are further struck by hits in combat or volley actions, they take injury tokens. (roll to hit as you would roll to hit a prone model).

CLASH

Clash works similarly to Volley. The difference is that models must be in base contact to engage in a Clash (except for a notable exception discussed later with Support special rule).

Check for Facing

If a model is in the Back Arc of its target when it attacks, it receives a +1 bonus to its Clash Score.

Check for Flanking

If a target is engaged by enemies in both its front and rear arc, it is said to be flanked. Models fighting enemy models that they are flanking receive a +1 bonus to their Clash Score.

When a model engages in a Clash, it may freely rotate to face whatever enemy it wishes.

Roll to Hit

The Target Score to hit is $7 + (\text{the attacking model's Clash Score} - \text{the defending model's Clash Score})$.

For each attack, roll 2D6. Adjust the Target Score by any penalties that needs to be applied. For each roll of 2d6, for each score that is equal to or less than the Target Score, the model has scored a HIT.

Roll Defense

As with Volley, the target player will then roll Defense rolls for each hit inflicted. The Defense score is modified by the attacking model's CLEAVE score (if applicable), and Evasion can be used in the same way as it is used against Volley.

Defended Obstacles

Models up against a linear obstacle like a fence or a wall are said to be behind a Defended Obstacle. Clash attacks coming from the other side of the obstacle suffer a -1 penalty. The defender may claim this, the attacker does not.

Injuries and On The Edge

Injuries and On The Edge are treated in the same way as they are with Volley.



Figure i- this 100k soldier is being flanked

Example: if two models with a clash score of 6 face off, the Target Score is a 7. This is because $7 + (\text{clash } 6 - \text{clash } 6 = 0) = 7$.

If Model A has a Clash Score of 9 and its Target has a Clash of 8, its Target Clash Score would be 8 ($7 + (9 - 8 = 1) = 8$).

If Model A has a Clash Score of 6 and its Target has a Clash of 8, its Target Clash Score would be 5 ($7 + (6 - 8 = -2) = 5$).

Models with Multiple Attacks Fighting Multiple Enemies

If a model is in contact with multiple enemy models, it may divide its attacks up however it wishes into the enemy models.

Carrying Over Wounds

It can be that a model has multiple attacks and they are facing models that only have a single wound or less wounds than the model has attacks.

When it is the case that an enemy model falls to 0 wounds, and the attacking model still has attacks remaining, it may do the following:

- If there are any other models in base contact with it, it may use those attacks on that model.
- If there are no other models in base contact with it but there are enemy models that were in base contact with an enemy model that was previously in base contact with the attacking model (as would be the case for supporting attacks), the model may use those attacks on that model.
- If there are no models in base contact and no support models, and the attacking model is classified as a Brute or Cavalry, it may allocate hits on any enemy models within 3" of it.
- If there are no models in base contact and no support models, and the attacking model is classified as a Monster, it may allocate hits on any enemy models within 6" of it.

Alternatively, the model may continue to hit the fallen models in base contact with it to stack Injury tokens as they have remaining attacks to do so.

WITHDRAW

Models wishing to withdraw from combat can do so by issuing this action. The model that wishes to withdraw must first make a Resolve roll. If successful, they may move back one inch from opposing models that they were in contact with. If this is not possible, move the model back until they are one inch away from the enemy models.

If the Resolve roll is failed, enemy models in base contact may perform a single attack using the rules for Clash on the withdrawing model. If the model survives this attack, it is then placed one inch from opposing models in the same way as if it passed its Resolve roll.

CAST SPELLS

Casting spells in Skirmish works the same as it does in Conquest. However, spread out as fighters get, hurling a fireball at a single skirmisher is not as impactful as hurling a fireball into a tightly packed troop of warriors!

Instead of targeting regiments, casters in skirmish target models. For the purpose of multiple hits, models within 3" of the target model can be affected by excess hits.

For example: a dweghom sorcerer hurls a fireball at a 100 Kingdoms soldier. He rolls three hits, and the first hit drops the soldier. Another soldier is 3" away, and one of the extra hits can target that soldier as well.

INJURY PHASE

During the Injury Phase, which is the final phase of a turn, the players will roll to see if their warriors are able to continue the fight or if they succumb.

For each injured warrior, roll a single Resolve check. For each Injury Token on the warrior, subtract one from their Resolve Score.

Example: a model has a Resolve Score of 9 but is down and has taken two Injury Tokens. They would make the resolve roll against a score of 7 instead of a 9.

On a success the injury token(s) are removed. On a failure, the warrior has succumbed to his injuries and is removed as a casualty.

If a warrior makes their Resolve Roll, roll them onto their front in the Prone position. This is how they will start the next turn and they are restored to 1 wound.

TERRAIN

Broken Ground – Models charging through zonal terrain with this rule roll a D6. On a 1 they take a wound. If they are cavalry they take 2 wounds instead of 1.

Dangerous Terrain – Models moving through terrain with this rule roll a D6. On a 1 they take a wound. If they are cavalry they take 2 wounds instead of 1.

Elevated (X) – Grants a size bonus to models standing in this terrain. Commonly used for hills.

Hindering Terrain – A model that charges through terrain with this rule does not inflict impact hits if it normally could. Additionally, medium and heavy models cannot claim an inspire bonus when charging into or through terrain with this rule.

Water – A model in water suffers a -1 penalty to its Clash Characteristic.

Very Dangerous Terrain – as Dangerous Terrain except the damage occurs on the D6 roll of a 1, 2, or 3.

Cover (X) – terrain given a cover rule will grant either Light or Heavy cover.

Impassable Terrain – Terrain that may not be moved through. Models may not move to within 1” of Impassable Terrain.

DRAW EVENTS AND SPECIAL RULES

Draw events and special rules still work the same in skirmish as they do in the main Conquest game. **When a model is activated, it activates its Draw Event or Events.**

Any special rule from the main game operates as it does, and any exceptions will be noted below.

Regiments and Stands are changed out for “Model”.

Healing: models that have been removed from play cannot be healed or brought back. Models that have been injured (brought to 0 wounds) that are healed roll over and are Prone, and any injury tokens they may have accumulated are completely removed.

Fearsome: models fighting a Fearsome enemy must make a Resolve check before rolling Clash dice. If they fail the Resolve check, they suffer a -1 penalty to their Clash Score for that turn.

Feral: Feral models must be activated first in their activation phase.

Flank: models with this special rule may choose to come in from a flanking table edge up to halfway up the table instead of their own table edge. So on a 36”x36” table, a model could enter a flanking table edge up to 18” toward the enemy.

Fluid Formation: models with this special rule have 360-degree line of sight. The model still has a front and rear arc.

Quicksilver Strike: If this model is successfully charged and has not yet activated, it may activate as an Interrupt action. This activation counts as the model's activation for the turn.

Rebellious: All rebellious models must be placed at either the first or last portion of the phase's activation (depending on their weight class)

Spearhead: Models with this special rule count their weight class one lower for determining which phase they activate in. Example: a heavy model with this rule would count as medium.

Support: Models with this rule may use a single attack an enemy model without being in base contact with the enemy, they merely need to be in base contact with a friendly model that is in base contact with the enemy. This also means that they cannot be targeted by attacks if they are not in base contact with the enemy model, provided the enemy model also does not have Support.

The image to the right shows a Man-At-Arms facing off against the spires. He is only in contact with one enemy model, but the second spire model has Support and is in base contact with its friend, and therefore it may attack the Man-At-Arms as well.



Sureshot: Models with this special rule ignore penalties for cover when shooting.

Terrifying – As Fearsome. Enemy models in contact with a Terrifying opponent count their Resolve characteristic with a -1 penalty.

Vanguard: The model may make an additional March action on the turn that it arrives, provided no enemies are within 8" of it when it arrived.

SETTING UP A FORCE

Normal versions of Skirmish are typically played up to 150 points. When playing a normal version of Skirmish the following rules are in affect:

- One in three models may be equipped with a missile weapon or ranged attack
- One in three models may be selected from the restricted army choices. If a selection is both mainstay and restriction in a list, it counts as restricted.
- No characters may be chosen
- No unit upgrades may be chosen
- To calculate individual model cost, take the additional stand cost and divide it by the number of models on a stand. Round up where applicable. Example: Men-At-Arms cost 35 points a stand. That comes out to be a value of 8 with some left over, so round up to 9 points a model for each Men-At-Arms choice.
- Forces may never exceed 20 models

Once a force has been assembled, you may nominate one of those models to be the leader. The leader may boost one statistic up by +1: Clash, Volley, Attacks, Defense, Wounds, or Resolve.

Leaders may not be targeted by ranged attacks unless they are the closest model to the shooter, or they are further than 8” away from a friendly model.

Friendly models within 8” of the leader may use their Resolve Score.

Leaders are immune to Route rolls. They will never flee the battlefield in such a way.

All leaders have the supremacy ability “FIGHT ON” – all failed resolve rolls that turn may be re-rolled.

Heroic Skirmish

Heroic Skirmish games bring in characters. In a Heroic Skirmish game, each force may field (optionally) one character. Additionally, the points of the game will play baseline at 250 points. In this case, the character is the leader, and receives no additional leader buffs.

ONE model from a regiment may upgrade to standard bearer at the appropriate cost. Standard bearers allow models that fail a route check to re-roll their result if within 8” of the standard.

Characters can purchase items and masteries, but there are no retinues in skirmish.

Designer Note: it is intentional that the big nasties are not as viable in small point sized games. However if you wish to increase the game size to enable more monsters, have at it!

