

WARHAMMER

AGE OF SIGMAR



WARHAMMER

MIGHTY BATTLES IN AN AGE OF UNENDING WAR



The Warhammer Vault exists to preserve the rich lore and background of Warhammer 40,000 and Warhammer Age of Sigmar. As such, outdated game scenarios and unit rules have been removed from this publication.



From the maelstrom of a sundered world, the Eight Realms were born. The formless and the divine exploded into life. Strange, new worlds appeared in the firmament, each one gilded with spirits, gods and men. Noblest of the gods was Sigmar. For years beyond reckoning he illuminated the realms, wreathed in light and majesty as he carved out his reign. His strength was the power of thunder. His wisdom was infinite. Mortal and immortal alike knelt before his lofty throne. Great empires rose and, for a while, treachery was banished. Sigmar claimed the land and sky as his own and ruled over a glorious age of myth.

But cruelty is tenacious. As had been foreseen, the great alliance of gods and men tore itself apart. Myth and legend crumbled into Chaos. Darkness flooded the realms. Torture, slavery and fear replaced the glory that came before. Sigmar turned his back on the mortal kingdoms, disgusted by their fate. He fixed his gaze instead on the remains of the world he had lost long ago, brooding over its charred core, searching endlessly for a sign of hope. And then, in the dark heat of his rage, he caught a glimpse of something magnificent. He pictured a weapon born of the heavens. A beacon powerful enough to pierce the endless night. An army hewn from everything he had lost. Sigmar set his artisans to work and for long ages they toiled, striving to harness the power of the stars. As Sigmar's great work neared completion, he turned back to the realms and saw that the dominion of Chaos was almost complete. The hour for vengeance had come. Finally, with lightning blazing across his brow, he stepped forth to unleash his creation.

The Age of Sigmar had begun.



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INTRODUCTION

Warhammer: Age of Sigmar is an epic tale of heroes, gods and monsters fighting a desperate battle for the fate of the Mortal Realms. Read on, and plunge into the storm-wracked vistas of endless war.

Warhammer: Age of Sigmar follows the thunderous arrival of the Stormcast Eternals as they shatter the dominion of Chaos across the Mortal Realms. The Stormcast Eternals are heroes taken from the ranks of mankind and reforged as superhuman beings with celestial lightning running in their veins. They have strength enough to destroy the warriors of Chaos, tear down their vile works, and even to resist the malice of the Dark Gods. Long has the storm of their vengeance brewed, though the memories of the atrocities committed against their former peoples remain fresh.

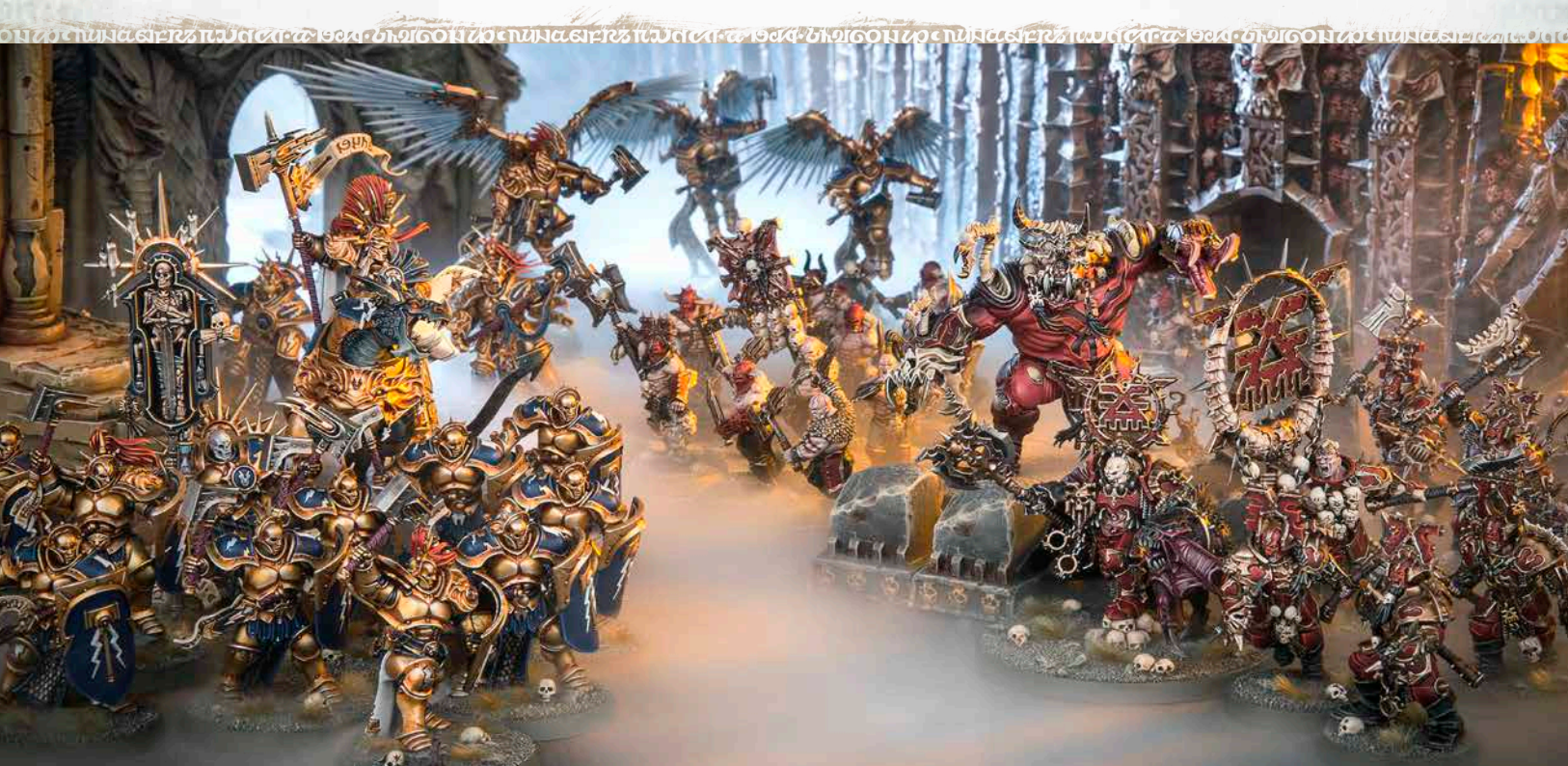
It is their thirst for revenge that will drive the Mortal Realms into the bloodiest age of battle ever seen – an age which you can experience today.

This new war will be hard-fought, for the forces of Chaos are at the zenith of their power. Gore-clad killers stalk every realm, from the sulphurous plains of Aqshy to the gates of the grave-cold netherworlds. Daemons frolic and stomp through ravaged battlefields and virgin forests alike. Armoured brutes force noble men to commit acts of violence and savagery, rivers of blood turn fertile lands into vile quagmires, and glittering cities are laid low only to be raised up again as bone-studded monuments to the Dark Gods.

The hordes of Chaos consider their dominion all but complete, their prey cast down and scattered without hope of victory. Yet as Sigmar's Storm breaks across the Mortal Realms, they will be proved wrong indeed.

Into these worlds of battle you must go, experiencing the cut and thrust of fantastical combat for yourself. Indomitable warriors and eldritch abilities are yours to command. As you master them, your victories will become all the sweeter.

Whether you take the role of avenging hero or bloodthirsty villain is up to you. Either way, once you've braved the maelstrom of conflict roiling across the Mortal Realms, you'll find yourself wanting to revisit it again and again. As you do so, you'll uncover the rich landscapes of the Age of Sigmar: eight new worlds plunged into a new era of battle, each with its own warriors, monsters and warscapes. Simply by turning the page, you will embark upon an adventure that can last a lifetime.







The Black Years, the Reaving Time, the Great Slaughter. It was called many things, an era of long defeat, an epoch of brutality – it was the Age of Chaos.

For many hundreds of years the forces of the Dark Gods ruled triumphant, their armies mercilessly grinding all beneath iron-shod heels. Seven of the Eight Realms were overrun, and spike-ridden fortresses erected to stand guard over ruined wastelands. These strongholds were malfeasance made manifest, and each drained the land's essence and spilled forth the baleful energies of Chaos.

All who opposed the conquerors were hewn down, their short-lived empires torn asunder, their histories consumed. All were drowned in blood. Still the Dark Gods remained unsated, for boundless was their thirst for destruction and decay, change and corruption.

Minions of the Dark Gods scoured the ruins, hunting down the remnants of once great civilisations. The slain were the lucky ones, for worse was in store for those enslaved...

So grew the power of Chaos, spreading across the Mortal Realms. It seemed the onslaught would not cease until the stars themselves were torn down into oblivion. With no opposition to deny them, the Dark Gods gloated. They revelled in the corruption, sure that final victory could soon be theirs.

In the midst of battle, the mightiest of mankind's warriors were transported away, for they were needed for a greater cause. With rolling thunder and a blinding flash, each of these aspirants was taken to Sigmaron amongst the stars. It was there, in the Celestial Realm, that their true trials were to begin.

In Heldenhall, the great Hall of Heroes, can be found the endless feast. For three days and three nights each warrior must build up strength for the long trials ahead.

In the Chamber of the Broken World, barbarians and technocratic nomads alike are blasted apart by lightnings. They are reforged anew – an agonising process that can last anywhere between a few heartbeats to long centuries. Even time turns molten in the Forge Eternal. Not all survive this process.

Seven times seven are the Cairns of Tempering, where body and soul are blended with the Gifts of Gods. Those that endure these ordeals awaken for the final test.

Upon the Anvil of the Apotheosis are Stormcast Eternals finally wrought. If they endure the shock waves from the last blessings of the World Hammer, they awaken imbued with the energies of the heavens, bequeathed with a portion of the God-King Sigmar's own divine powers.









Although the armies of the free peoples were broken and their civilisations shattered, not all had been lost to Chaos. While the scattered remnants of free folk cowered, Sigmar retreated to Azyr, the Realm of Heavens. There, in reclusion, the God-King forged his new army.

It was in the great realm of Aqshy where Sigmar's vengeance was first unleashed.

Thunder rolled, and twin-tailed lightning split the lowering skies. Each strike seared the air, crackling streaks of pure incandescence. For an instant – less than a fraction of a heartbeat – each bolt lit its surroundings with stark brilliance. Following the blinding flash came a thunderclap, and the ground shook from the battle cry of the heavens.

Each thunderstrike left behind more than blackened scorchmarks. From out of that glare strode hulking shapes, lightning still crackling about their golden armour.

Thus did the Stormcast Eternals enter the fray – borne upon the lightning bolts cast by Sigmar himself.

And so began a new epoch.

The Age of Sigmar.



TO COUNTER THE DARKNESS

In the bleakest hours of the Age of Chaos Sigmar sealed off the Gates of Azyr, shutting the Celestial Realm. From that moment, the God-King prepared for the day when he could reclaim the Mortal Realms. Only when he deemed the time was right would he unleash his greatest weapon...

Upon his edifice throne, high above the remnants of the Broken World, Sigmar brooded. A king of gods and a warrior born, it was not his nature to concede.

In the wake of the disastrous daemon invasions, Sigmar had no choice but to bar the Gates of Azyr. From his throne, far-seeing Sigmar gazed upon the forsaken realms, watching the tribes struggle beneath harsh oppression.

Everywhere the God-King saw his foes, like wolves amongst sheep. Monsters of indescribable horror preyed upon mankind, and armies of orruks swept

over the realms. Like maggots in a corpse, ratmen burrowed through the ruins of civilisation, their gnaw-holes tearing rents in the fabric of time itself. The dead were restless – driven by Nagash's insatiable lust for power – and they marched at his command. Yet all paled in comparison to the sheer might wielded by the Chaos Gods.

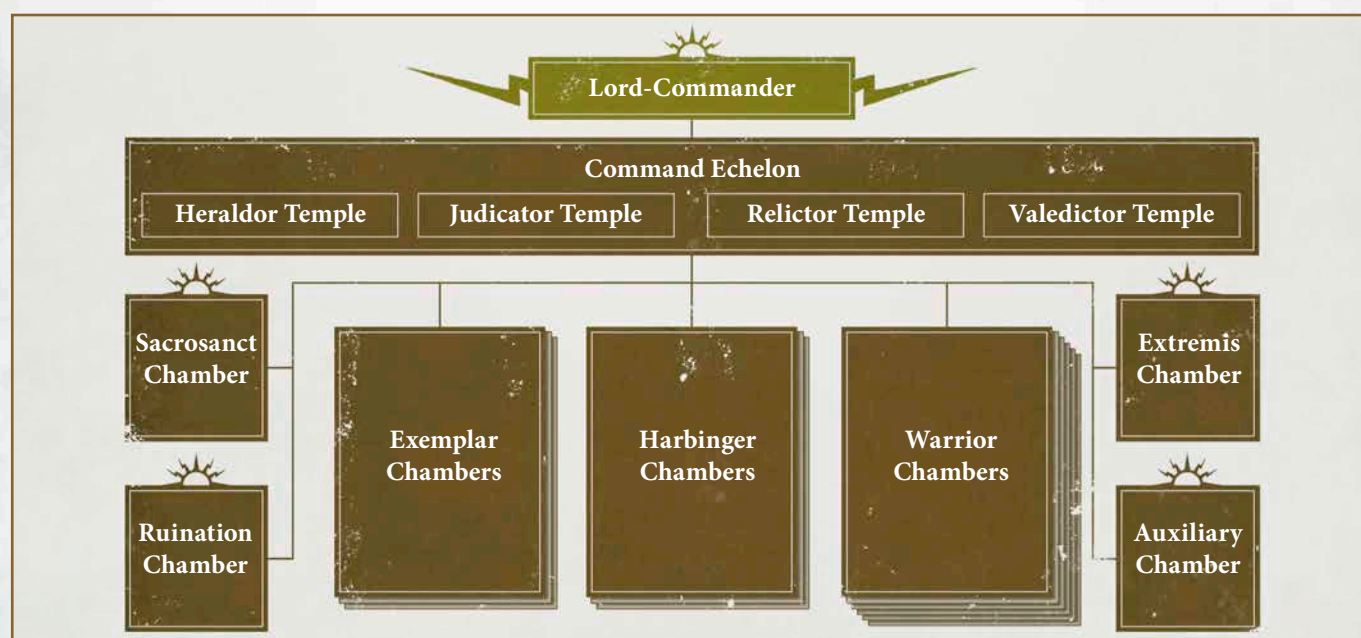
Again and again the followers of the Ruinous Powers overwhelmed all that stood before them. Even the best defended of mortal settlements were overrun; all of the realms save Azyr were ablaze with battle and flame.

Those not destroyed suffered an even worse fate – forced to serve dark powers. Daemons cavorted atop the piled bones of the defeated, glutting their every destructive desire upon the enslaved survivors.

Beyond hope, beyond reason, the Age of Chaos grew darker.

Sigmar knew that he could rally the far-scattered forces of mankind. What was left of the broken tribes had by now lost the vestiges of civilisation. In these barbaric warriors still fighting for their freedom, Sigmar saw a ferocity of spirit

STORMCAST ETERNAL STORMHOST



that could equal their foes' savagery. For a time they might prevail, yet he knew that, ultimately, an army of these warriors would only fall before the awful might of the Dark Gods' minions.

The history of the Age of Chaos was filled with tales of heroism, but too often those sagas ended in defiant last stands or honourable defeat. Some victories had been won – such as that at the Gnarlwood in the Realm of Ghur, and the Greenfire Gates that connected the Heavens to the Realm of Chamon. Yet such triumphs granted temporary

reprieves at best. Fundamentally, the warriors of mankind were but mortal, while the unnatural power of Chaos flowed through the blood of their terrible foes.

In order to resist the conquerors, Sigmar needed a new army. It had to be a force that could stand against the terrors of the Chaos domination and emerge triumphant.

Only by laying down the mantle of Warrior-God and fully embracing the role of God-King could Sigmar

succeed. To aid his new endeavours, Sigmar called upon the fractious pantheon of feuding gods that he had first assembled in the Age of Myth. Willingly or not, each gave to Sigmar a gift that became instrumental in what was to come.

In Sigmaron, Sigmar's palace-city among the stars of the Celestial Realm, gleaming new halls arose. Forges, laboratories, armouries and barracks were erected and a great work begun. There were forged the first of mankind's finest warriors, the Stormcast Eternals.





HAMMERS OF SIGMAR

WARRIOR CHAMBER



The exact combination of retinues within each conclave may vary from chamber to chamber, but in most cases the number of retinues in each will match the example below.

ANGELOS CONCLAVE

3 ANGELOS RETINUES



PALADIN CONCLAVE

6 PALADIN RETINUES



REDEEMER CONCLAVE

9 REDEEMER RETINUES



CHAMBER COMMAND

LORD-CELESTANT

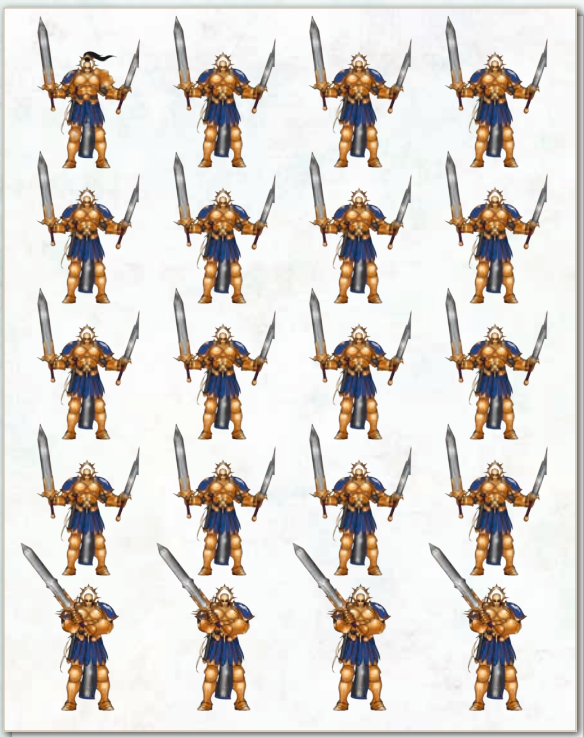


LORD-RELICTOR



AUXILIARY COMMAND

May be augmented by additional officers



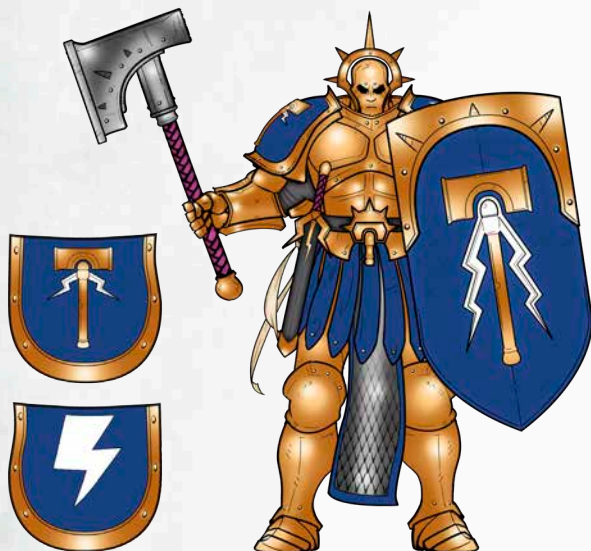
✦ JUSTICAR CONCLAVE

6 JUSTICAR RETINUES



WARHOSTS OF THE HEAVENS

With battles and invasions raging unchecked across the realms, Sigmar needed his superhuman forces to wage wars on many fronts. Thus were the Stormcast Eternals organised into autonomous armies called Stormhosts. Each Stormhost has its own unique colours and insignia.



The Hammers of Sigmar were the first of the Stormhosts to be assembled. Already their war banners have been unfurled in battles across every realm.



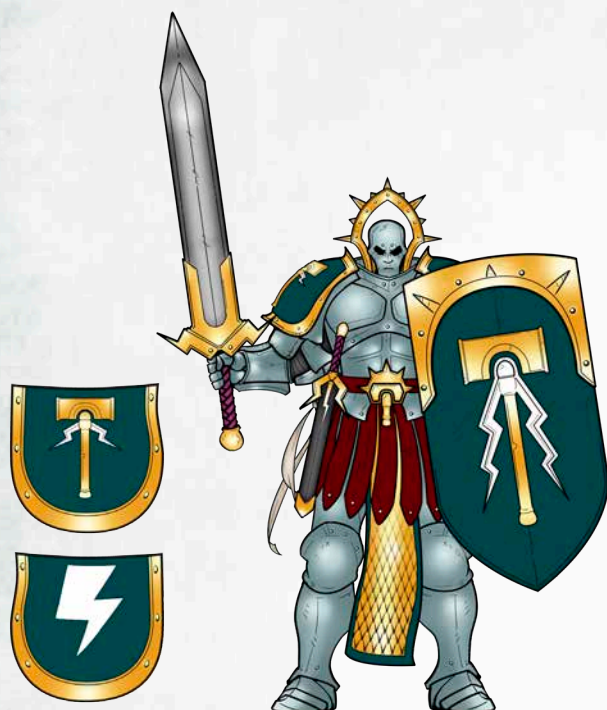
The Astral Templars not only dared to enter the Gnarlwood, but returned out of the dark victorious. They suffer no monster or beastly abomination to live.



The Celestial Vindicators know neither mercy nor restraint. These Stormcast Eternals are relentless in their pursuit of bloody and exacting revenge against Chaos.



The purest of warriors make up the Stormhost known as the Maelstrom of Light. It was they that turned back the daemon legions at the Battle of Verdant Abyss.



All Stormcast Eternals strike quickly, but none more so than the Knights of the Aurora. They are as swift as the lightning that bears them, true masters of rapid assault.



The warriors of the Anvils of the Heldenhammer are dark and brooding, as their Reforging came as the Broken World spun sinister under a magical gloom.



A stoic Stormhost, the Lions of Sigmar say little, yet their actions speak volumes. The thunderous roar of their battlecry resounds wherever they march to war.



The righteous passion of the Hallowed Knights is so strong that the fell magicks of their foes have little hold upon these silver-girded crusaders.

THE BATTLE OF WHISPERING GATE

For aeons, tribes of wandering hillfolk have whispered legends of a mysterious portal. It is said that once, in the days of myth, it was possible to mount a flight of ancient stone stairs and pass through the Whispering Gate, to travel to lands far beyond their own. Simply standing near that mystic arch had been enough to feel its strange power, and one could hear the murmuring of voices calling from beyond the shimmering portal.

However, the region was shunned by the hillfolk, for it had become a place of great evil. Darksome idols had been raised before the gate, and ravager warbands gathered from their hunts to enact debased rites before the towering stone monoliths.

All of that changed when came the thunder...

Down shot bolts from the heavens, and after each strike they appeared – Stormhost after Stormhost, chamber after chamber. The Stormcast Eternals came, still wreathed in strands of lightning. Their weapons and eyes glowed, lit as if by the very fires of vengeance.

Great was that battle, for the Blood Ravagers were many, and their numbers were swollen by daemon legions. Back and forth the fighting raged, as each new threat – be it greater daemon, beast-machine, or cavalry that rode atop brass monsters – was met in turn by more Stormcast Eternals.

Eventually, through might of arms and their righteous fury, the Stormcast Eternals prevailed, yet their triumph was dearly bought. Hundreds of their armoured brethren were slain, mauled by claw, melted by daemonfire, or hewn by hellish axe stroke. By battle's end, the enemy's dead were strewn in piles many deep – yet nowhere amidst such bloody ruin could be found any sign of the slain of Sigmar's Scions.





AZYZR

The Realm of Heavens

The Realm of Heavens glitters like a swirl of celestial jewels, its palaces and spires glowing from within. Here, mighty Sigmar reigns supreme.

AQSHY

The Realm of Fire

Lands of passions untold and volatile landscapes. In this realm, aggression is born and carried afar upon hot, gusting winds.

SHYISH

The Realm of Death

Domain of endings and silent decay, where all is in decline. No realm is more haunted, for all gates to the Underworlds reside here.

GHYRAN

The Realm of Life

From barren to abundant, this realm is forever flowing in cycle. Yet when in bloom, there are no lands more verdant or bountiful.

HYSH

The Realm of Light

Once the domain of reason and symmetry, here there is still purity. The very lands themselves are rife with symbolism and hidden meaning.

GHUR

The Realm of Beasts

A primeval realm of untamed savagery, all of its lands have one thing in common: only the strongest can hope to survive there.

CHAMON

The Realm of Metal

Dawn breaks golden over the hard and unyielding lands of this realm. Strange transmutations abound amongst its vast mountain ranges.

ULGU

The Realm of Shadows

Thirteen regions, each a realm of secrets and riddles whispered upon the breeze. All the shrouded countries are saturated with illusion and lurking menace.

CHAOS

The Realm of the Dark Gods

Roiling, inconceivable, this realm encompasses nightmarish landscapes beyond counting. Those who trespass upon such domains are devoured, grotesquely transformed, or damned for all eternity.









THE CONQUERORS

Rivers of blood have been spilt and skull pyres stacked, but still the Chaos Gods remain unappeased. Armed and armoured in hell-forged steel, the servants of the Ruinous Powers press onwards. By axe, sword, and claw the onslaught rages, and all who dwell in the Eight Realms must submit or die.

The road to the supremacy of Chaos was paved with skulls. Entire cities were sacrificed in dark rituals and the ruined corpses of foes piled in red mountains of triumph. Some gore-soaked victories were won through treachery, sorcery or diseased

corruption; however, it was bloodthirsty armies that caused the greater part of the destruction.

Wherever the Khorne Bloodbound stalked the land, death followed. Beneath their iron stride civilisations were ground to dust, their peoples mercilessly destroyed, corrupted, or enslaved.

These mortal agents of Chaos were not left to wreak the slaughter alone. From out of the Realm of Chaos came the will of the Dark Gods made manifest – the daemon legions. Where they marched reason collapsed and anarchy erupted. Beneath their foul tread the lands themselves began to fray, transforming into nightmarish vistas – mirrored reflections of the madness-inducing realms beyond. Even the largest mortal force of arms could only slow the brutal invasions, proving powerless to halt the ravaging hordes. Worse was to follow.

In their wake, the daemon legions left more than just devastation – the wreckage of the realms was saturated with fell powers, a dark seeding. It is the nature of Chaos not just to conquer, but to corrupt as well, and each with triumph they spilled more unnatural energies into the Mortal Realms. The lands were blighted, mutating into a new Realm of Chaos.

Many of the realms' beasts became twisted, slaving monsters. Mutations rippled through the remaining mortal tribes, and some even began to worship the Ruinous Powers openly, clamouring for their favour.

There are no rewards richer than those granted by the Dark Gods. Unlimited power or earthly pleasures, all are there for the taking. In exchange for grisly tributes and foul sacrifices, the Chaos Gods granted gifts beyond compare. Mortal warriors became superhuman, ironclad killers whose martial prowess was unsurpassed. Sorcerers could mould magics with but a whispered word. All strove to please their dark masters, committing unspeakable acts in the hopes of gaining the ultimate gift: their own immortality.

Many would discover that such spoils go to the victor alone; those that displease the Chaos Gods soon suffer horrors beyond description.

**'Blood for the Blood God,
Skulls for the Skull Throne!'**

*There is no battle cry more
dreaded across the Eight
Realms. All who hear it know it
as a prelude to wanton slaughter
and merciless massacre.*



THE CHAOS POWERS

From beyond the boundaries of reality, the Chaos Gods look upon the Eight Realms with covetous eyes. It is their nature, their all-consuming purpose, to destroy. Relentless and unstoppable, all of their incomprehensible energies are directed to collapsing reason and perverting order.

Far from the light of sun or star lies the infernal, ever-changing Realm of Chaos. There, the Dark Gods rule supreme – the mutable landscapes battlegrounds for their daemonic legions. Their rivalry is eternal, each god seeking dominance over his brothers. As one power gains mastery through warfare, manipulation, corruption or sorcery, the others combine against him. New pacts flourish until another conqueror emerges, only to be thrown down in his turn. Yet a common cause can unite these foes – at least for a time. The Eight Realms are new playthings – fresh battlegrounds to be vied for and fought over. Each of the Dark Gods longs to win them, that he may twist new territories into his own unnatural vision.



KHORNE

Khorne is the most powerful of the Chaos Gods. No subtlety or aesthetics has he, for Khorne is the Blood God, the Lord of Skulls. There is room in his black heart for rage and rage alone. Warfare, slaughter and martial challenge are Khorne's only desires.



NURGLE

The Lord of Disease delights in decay and physical corruption. The cycle of putrefaction, rebirth and morbidity draws Nurgle the way a corpse draws flies. During times of pestilence and rampant contagion, Nurgle waxes strongest, to the dismay of all.



GREAT HORNED RAT

The Great Horned Rat is blight and pestilence incarnate. Having recently ascended to the pantheon, the skaven deity is not yet considered an equal by his dark brothers, but stealthy insinuation and treacherous plots have ever been the vermin way. Soon he will rise...



TZEENTCH

Tzeentch's domains are magic and guile, for he is the god of sorcery and deceit, the Changer of the Ways. The Great Manipulator and Architect of Fate is forever hatching labyrinthine schemes – plots within plots that are beyond the ken of mortalkind.



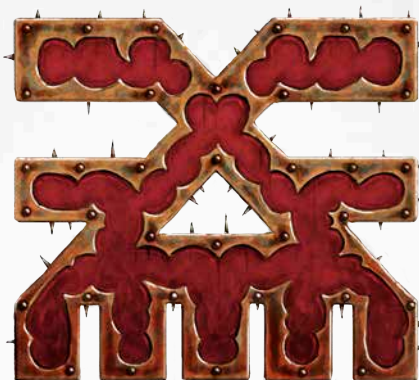
SLAANESH

Slaanesh is the Dark Prince, the God of Excess and Lord of Pleasure, and the most beautiful of all the Chaos Gods. Slaanesh's throne stands empty, however, for the god himself is lost. His minions wring their hands in anguish, while the remaining powers rejoice.



THE BLOOD GOD'S DOMAIN

The largest kingdom of the Realm of Chaos is a land of blood and brass – a battlefield unending. This is Khorne's domain – a hellish land of battles beyond count, where blasted wastelands stained ruddy with lifeblood give way to bone-strewn plains pocked with rage-spewing volcanoes. Craters scar the landscape where titanic combatants have fallen, serving as jagged monuments to their fervour. This grim, desolate realm is the black heart of war itself, an endless fight pit where the greatest warriors that ever were – mortal and daemon both – are tested over and over again.



The Chaos Powers rise and fall, each ascendant for a time. None of the Dark Gods, however, can long match Khorne, and his iron will is turned to seeing his dominion last forever.

Towering over the blasted battlefields, stretching beyond the sky, stands the Brass Citadel. This is Khorne's fortress, so impossibly vast that all other strongholds seem no more than the playthings of children. Within those colossal walls can be found the Blood God's blast furnaces, armouries, rage factories, prisons and the seat of his throne. This almighty edifice of brass sits upon a mountain of skulls – an ever-growing pile that reflects the martial victories of his followers. Such tributes feed Khorne's glory but never quench the Dark God's eternal thirst for more blood and death.

Broken in body, Skul'rath was banished from the Mortal Realms, and the Bloodthirster's spirit forced to return to his maker. Such a journey – and fate – was infinitely worse than the death itself.

Alone and unaided, Skul'rath completed the excruciating odyssey, his hunched and crippled form moving in painful lurches. After an infinity of suffering, the spirit finally dragged itself across the seemingly endless skullfields. At last Skul'rath had reached the end of the broken lands, lifting his battered being to stand before the mighty Brass Citadel – an insignificant speck before that colossal edifice of spike-ridden metal and manifest rage.

The main gates were closest, yet they were not for Skul'rath. The defeated were forbidden to pass beneath those mighty, eight-pillared arches. Instead Skul'rath was forced to cross the moat of boiling blood at the Gates of the Vanquished – a dishonour worse than

torture. There wailed voices of those bested in battle, deposed daemon lords and the crownless, who once were kings. Before that barrier Skul'rath was challenged.

'Who dares return defeated?' asked the Gatekeeper in its voice of iron.

The words brought shame and anger, so that Skul'rath smouldered in impotent rage as he announced his true eight syllabled name, which none should hear.

'Who has bested you?' said the same hard voice.

'By the will of Sigmar was I defeated. At the hands of the Stormcast Eternals was I cast down,' growled Skul'rath, every word like an unbearable lash.

So it was for the first time that the name of the Stormcast Eternals was spoken before the Brass Citadel. It would be repeated many times soon after.



WRATH OF AGES

It was nearly done. Almost all had fallen before the onslaught of the Chaos armies. However, the Blood God knew that true power could not be shared. It has always been the right of the strong to dominate, and none have ever been stronger than Khorne. Total victory would soon be in his iron grasp...

Khorne cannot long abide pacts or alliances. Ultimately, the Blood God favours only battle lust, the purer and more absolute the better. Khorne looks well upon warriors who, in their fury, turn upon even their own kind. It is they alone that grasp the greater truth: Khorne cares not from whence the blood flows, only that it does so.

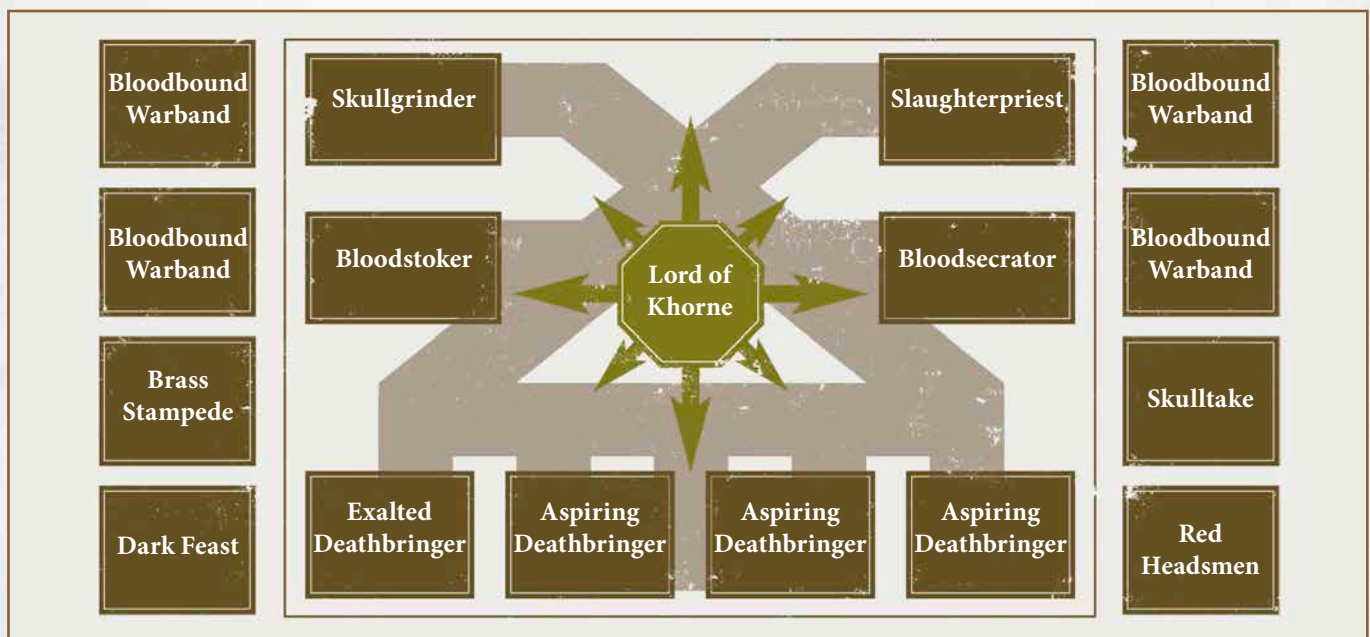
During the last centuries of the Age of Chaos, victory over the Mortal Realms seemed all but assured. While the fugitive enclaves and hidden remnants of surviving civilisations were hunted down and destroyed, the Blood God

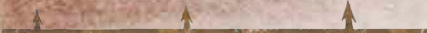
allowed his smouldering gaze to be drawn towards more glorious battles. As was often the case, it was the minions of his brother gods that bore the brunt of Khorne's wrath.

A bloodtide was unleashed in the Realm of Chaos, as Khorne loosed his daemon legions. With great fury they speared deep into the Garden of Nurgle and the Crystal Labyrinth. In the Mortal Realms the Blood Times began, as Khorne warbands turned on former comrades, slaughtering them in the Blood God's name. Chaos armies tore themselves apart in a storm of violence.

Across all realms, the red and black banners of the Blood God were being raised in triumph. No foes could stop Khorne's red ravagers – not the remnants of Sigmar's alliance, not the orruk rampage, not even the arcane intrigues of Tzeentch or counter-attacks by the foul alliance of Nurgle and the Great Horned Rat. All paid a steep price for daring to defy mighty Khorne. Campaigns of skull-taking conquest only slowed when rival champions of the Blood God fell upon each other. Even this pleased Khorne, for no weak link would be tolerated, and all bloodshed was magnificent.

BLOODBOUND WARHORDE





Seeking worthier foes, assaults were launched upon the closed Gates of Azyr. Khorne alone would have the glory of breaking the heavens. This bold challenge stirred the Bloodlords, the eight dreaded greater daemons who command the Blood God's Legions. Paroxysms of rage were stoked to new pinnacles as daemon and mortal alike readied themselves for great slaughter.

It was at this time of strife and upheaval in the Chaos forces that the Stormcast Eternals struck. With lightning and hammer, they shattered ravaging Khornate warbands. Stormcast assaults seized back Realmgates and scattered the besieging forces that had gathered before the great Gates of Azyr.

Not since Sigmar created his Great Alliance had such a challenge been issued. In those days, the response of the Ruinous Powers had been as swift as it was bloody. This time, however, the Chaos armies were far diffused and divided, hesitant to join forces once again.

Seeing what was to be his final victory slipping away, Khorne started from his brass throne. So great was his bellow of rage that every realm shook to its core, the god's war cry echoing through eternity. A coppery wind – a blasting furnace gale – blew out of the Realm of Chaos, and scoured the Mortal Realms.

Everywhere – upon rippling banners or emblazoned into scaly flesh – the rune of Khorne burned bright. If it was war these bold upstarts wanted, Khorne would show them its true meaning.



WARBANDS OF KHORNE

There is but one way to gain the grim favour of the Blood God. Whether rampaging across the Mortal Realms, or battering upon the Gates of Azyr, the warbands of Khorne do not fight for honour, wealth, or even necessarily for victory. They fight for bloodshed and to attract the eye of their merciless god.



Lord Khuldrak's Reapers have not yet met a foe they could not slaughter. It was they that slew the last of the rift tribes, and defeated the orruks at the Beastgates.



Murderers all, the Brazen Butchers aspire to no more exalted aim than indiscriminate killing – the more blood they spill in the process, the better.



The warriors who call themselves the Warmongers were once part of the Gyr tribes. They gained Khorne's favour by betraying their comrades in bloody fashion.



The distinctive black axes of the Ravagers of Khur are known too well in the ruined provinces. Many Khorgoraths follow the warband in hopes of further slaughter.



The Skullfiend Tribe slay with single-minded purpose, intent only on taking the heads of their victims as offerings for their unholy master. Skulls for the Skull Throne!



Khorne daemons fight alongside the warband known as the Grimskulls and the bloodletting is horrific. In combat there are none more brutal, nor more feared.



The Brass Skulls know that Khorne is not worshipped in temples, but upon battlefields. He craves not supplication, but blood, and the Brass Skulls deliver it.



The Axes of Skarbrand worship a mighty Bloodthirster, seeing this daemon lord as the physical incarnation of rage, and often go to war alongside his red-skinned hosts.



It is no mortal that leads the Iron Horde, but a Daemon Prince. It was after the massacre at Gnawdwell that the Blood God himself elevated Balghor to his lofty status.



The Blackspikes enter combat with battle cries of 'skulls, skulls, skulls'. The grim chant grows faster and louder as the gore-splashing violence reaches its crescendo.



The infamous Goretide subjugated Aqshy many years ago, and now their every fresh kill only cements the tyrannical rulership of their lord, the mighty Korghos Khul.



Such is their berserker fury that none may stand before, or even alongside the Crimson Fury. Be they allies or foes, all are despatched by these black-hearted killers.





THE **AGE** **OF** **SIGMAR**

BENEATH CLOUDS OF WAR

The lightning strikes of the Stormcast Eternals heralded the beginning of the Age of Sigmar. Yet these new warrior-elites did not fight alone, for across all realms, armies of many races were on the march. New wars erupted and spread like wildfire, and old ones rekindled, blazing again into white-hot fury.

To the beat of skull-tom drums orruks emerged from hidden strongholds. Once more their numbers had swollen into menacing green tides. After years of subjugation by Chaos, the tribes were eager to roll forth, meting out their own kind of destruction. In the Jade Realm, Ghyran, new armies sprouted at Alarielle's call, relaunching their bitter campaign to reclaim their lands from the foetid servants of Nurgle. Above Chamon, mechanised cloud armies plied the skies, while in the underworlds of Shyish a great and sinister power coalesced once again...

The Age of Chaos had nearly consumed the Mortal Realms. The lands rippled unnaturally, monolithic icons thrust upwards out of the writhing grounds. Vast swathes of territory had already transformed fully into twisted replicas of the Dark Gods' domains. Yet instead of seeking out the last remaining enclaves and delivering the final blow, the forces of Chaos had turned upon one another. It was in the midst of this disarray that the lightning bolts from the heavens struck. As if inspired by these new beacons of resistance, many others joined the growing fray.

Most enigmatic of all combatants were the cold-blooded seraphon. From the stars they came, called into the thick of the war by the magic of the slann. Using teeth, claws and ineffable weaponry, the reptilian warriors set savagely upon the forces of Chaos. Following each battle, they departed with no word other than the triumphal roars of their saurian monsters.





Long had Nagash brooded upon his last defeat...

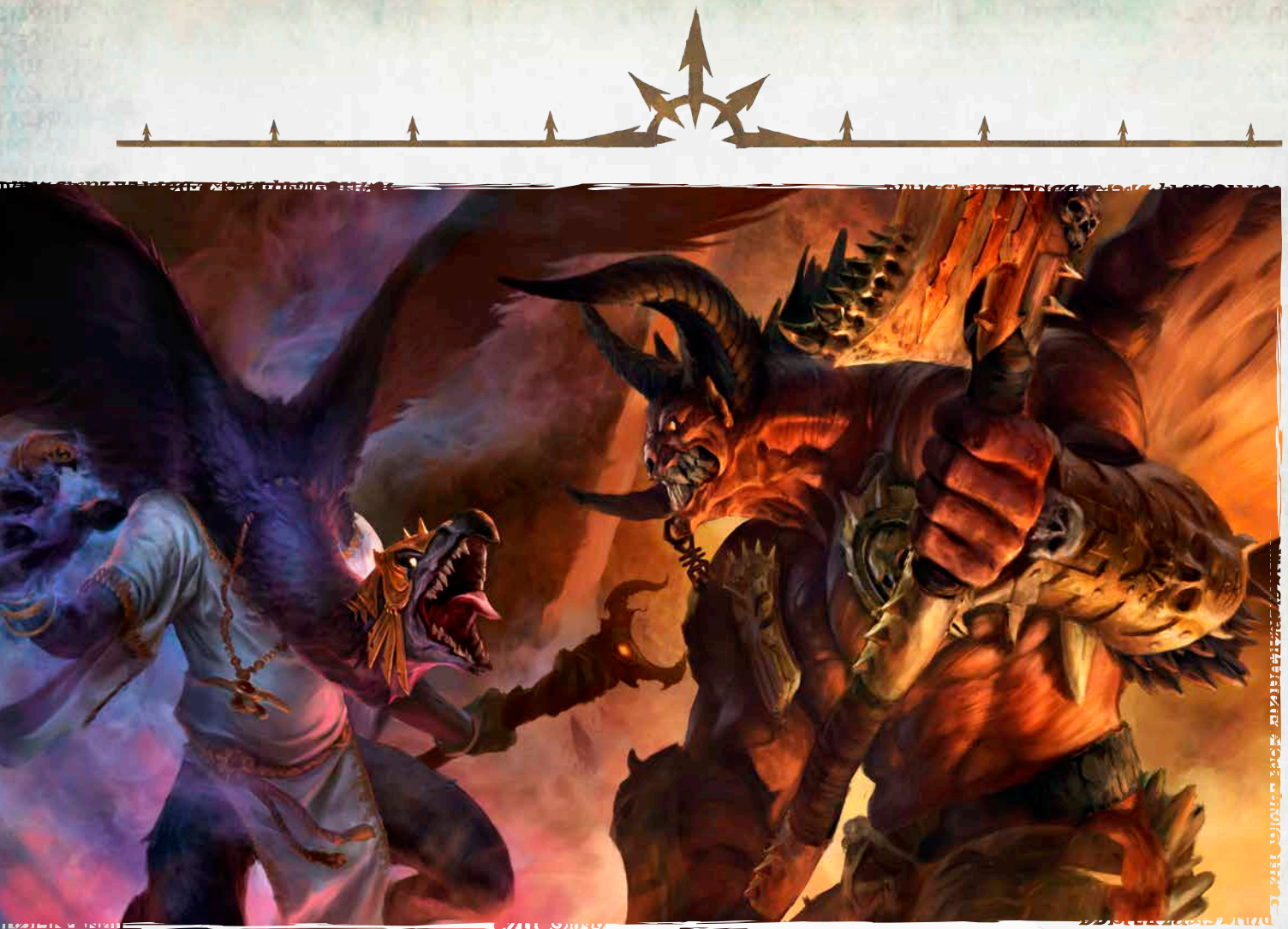
Following Nagash's crushing defeat in the War of Bones, Chaos invaders had conquered much of Shyish, the Amethyst Realm, save the lowest underworlds. The war had stretched on for centuries before Nagash's final defeat by Archaon, Champion of Chaos Champions, at the Battle of Black Skies. Yet killing the Master of Death was not so easy. Once again Nagash coalesced upon his throne, for his titanic, undying will refused to accept defeat. Rumour of his return was like a wind chill enough to freeze marrow. The undead, their numbers swollen by wars unending, rose again for battle.

In the Ulgulands – the mysterious Realm of Shadows – entire Chaos armies were swallowed up. Mystic fog banks engulfed everything, and when at last the cloying shrouds dispersed, all that remained of the Dark Gods' minions was carrion. The followers of Khorne – eager to meet a worthy challenge and scornful of anything that skulked in the fogs – marched in force upon the mistlands. Slaanesh's followers came in still greater numbers; speaking of signs that pointed towards the whereabouts of their missing god. They blamed Malerion and eagerly sought his whereabouts.



What prowls in the shadows of the Ulgulands?





The most successful and ruthless commander of the Age of Chaos was Archaon, the Everchosen. Known to many as the Three-Eyed King, he was the greatest of the mortal champions of the Dark Gods. Enemy armies fell before him like wheat before the scythe.

Before the Daemon Wars – when the Chaos powers turned upon themselves – each of the Dark Gods demanded Archaon's sole patronage. In refusing to choose a single deity, the Everchosen was forced to overcome each of the Chaos Gods' wrath. Each power felt that if Archaon did not submit solely to them, then he must be destroyed lest he be lured into serving one of their brother-gods instead.

Archaon overcame each of these trials, emerging stronger than ever. Tribes flocked to him, and from amongst them he plucked his champions. Archaon remained the foremost leader of mortal men – a master of countless hordes, and a commander of colossal beasts and monsters. Before his iron-armoured onslaught, the last bastions of the Realm of Light were swept away. It was Archaon who cast down the living idol that led the orruks of the Wildplains, and he that slaughtered the darkling beastfolk in the Realm of Shadow.

In his wake, the Everchosen still planted the banners of each of the Chaos Gods, save only the Horned

Rat, whom he disdained as unworthy. Archaon never doubted his vision of Chaos triumphant, of the Eight Realms merged into the Realm of Chaos, with himself as its overlord. It was his right.

Ever fickle, the Chaos Gods eventually ceased in their efforts to slay Archaon. Khorne saw a warrior unbowed, a killer unmoved by politics or plotting. Nurgle saw a gifted corrupter – the swathes of destruction left by Archaon were fertile grounds for new plagues. Tzeentch – more suspicious than his brothers – saw in Archaon perhaps more than he had ever suspected. New gifts were bestowed upon Archaon, the Dark Gods once more anointing him Everchosen, demigod of Chaos.



For enough Ur-gold, the Fyreslayers will fight anyone.

The first strikes of the Stormcast Eternal were against the Chaos forces in Aqshy. Yet other forces rose up to battle also. The flame-bearded Fyreslayers emerged from the mountains, marching down the ironways. While Sigmar had always counted the forge-father Grungni and his offspring amongst his closest allies, these duardin worshipped the god Grimnir, and were far more mercenary. They fought against Chaos – but only for payment in Ur-gold. More disturbing still, if a counter-offer was generous enough, the Fyreslayers would just as willingly fight alongside Chaos armies.

The insidious skaven were still the most prolific of races. Despite the monumental losses suffered in their own civil war, which had just ended, the skaven were once more invading in numbers beyond measure, as they had in the early days of the Age of Chaos. Without warning, they struck from below – rising from the subterranean depths to unleash devastating attacks. Not only did the ratmen bury their foes in a living tide of gnashing, clawing warriors, but they also bore diabolical weapons of their own invention.



Not even the Realm of Heavens is safe from skaven spies.



Ethereal winds swept across Shyish – a howling spirit-storm that summoned the fallen.

Throughout the infernal regions crypts burst open, burial mounds toppled, and the dead rose anew.

When Nagash emerged from the Starless Gates he did so with but a single purpose: to reclaim the Realm of the Dead. Chaotic invaders had dared to usurp his rightful rule. From the depths of the Seven Abyssal Pits to the Skull Isles, from the Helstone Monuments to the Desert of Bones, Nagash claimed lordship over all the lands of the dead. He was the father of necromancy, death incarnate, ruler of all the underworlds. Before his fall, Nagash had commanded all departed spirits. As for the living population of Shyish, only those who worshipped and paid tribute were given leave to remain.

Upon his emergence, Nagash cast an invocation of such titanic proportions that a tomb-chill could be felt across all the Mortal Realms. Black tendrils of purest necromancy spread outwards from his skeletal fingertips, awakening the dead and summoning all unquiet spirits. Soon, all across the Realm of Death, the Chaos conquerors were under attack. Warriors from long-dead civilisations lurched once more into battle, driven by a will not their own. With the creaking of bones, the undead legions marched to war again.







WARS OF THE DEAD

Driven by the will of Nagash and his fell lieutenants, the Mortarchs, the undead armies fought to reclaim the Realm of the Dead. Shambling hordes of corpses were pitted against the superhuman fighting prowess of Chaos-marked mortal warriors, barrow blade against hell-forged daemon steel.

Chaos usurpers had drained the lands of death magic, dampening the spirits of the dead. Where Nagash's crypt-like strongholds once stood, there now loomed Chaos fortresses, each bearing emblems of the Dark Gods. The burial mounds of lost civilisations had been razed, and the black pyramids' power siphons destroyed. Yet they underestimated Nagash and his necromantic might.

Once more the lands surged with fell energies, raising the dead and restoring spirits from their shadowy existence. Assailed by armies of walking corpses, the Chaos invaders were cut down. The Dark Gods had gifted their followers with supernatural abilities – with blazing axes and iron-hard skin – but they were outnumbered by a foe that would not die. A single Chaos Champion might butcher a hundred foes before being pulled down. Yet such heroics were wasted, for the dismembered corpses and scattered bones reformed anew, now joined by the fallen champion. The deadwalker and deathrattler hordes were not alone:

wraith creatures and fell spirits of the ether thrust ghostly clawed hands through breastplates to clutch at their foe's hearts, or matched grave blades with Chaos Warriors. Bat-winged beasts of bone and horn battled mutated monsters. The air crackled as Chaos Sorcerers strove against the black arts of Nagash and his Mortarchs.

With Nagash at their fore, the dead won the Slaughter at the Starless Gates. Nagash had gathered his power and nursed his hatred. From rime-frozen Helspoint to Morrsend, toppled monuments arose again, rent flesh reknitted, and dissipated spirits reformed. This time Nagash would not be stopped.



WARS IN SHYISH

BARROW WARS

Towards the close of the Age of Chaos Nagash's forces were driven back. The Great Necromancer himself was slain at the Battle of Black Skies, but a fierce counter-attack by the newly returned Mortarchs claimed what remained of their master's ruined form. They retreated to a lost underworld, a remnant of a bygone era.

THE RUIN OF NAGASHIZZAR

With Nagash's overthrow, the stronghold of Nagashizzar was toppled. So thorough was its destruction that the very ground upon which the monumental fortress stood was made a blasted crater, yet the ruin still radiated a fell power.

THE STARLESS GATES REOPEN

The Wars of the Dead were begun anew when Nagash burst from the underworld of Stygxx, destroying the besieging forces.

STRANGE ALLIANCE

Undead forces attacked the Arch of Bones, a gateway to Azyr. They were turned aside by Khar'zak'ghul – a Bloodthirster with a mantle of rage. Only the arrival of Stormcast Eternals saved the undead forces from being destroyed.







After long years of peace, something slithered into the jade paradise of Ghyran...

Disease blossomed everywhere. Festerling tendrils quickly wound their way to choke off the light. Blightwyrms spread so rapidly that natural wonders withered, blackened and fell in the span of heartbeats. The hale and hearty wilted before the pestilent storm, and the very lands heaved with vile corruptions, the ground churning with unnatural growths. Thus the Age of Chaos came to the verdant kingdoms and so began the war to control the fairest and most fertile of realms.

After battles uncounted, the Lord of Blight and Corruption held sway. Everywhere decay ruled, save only for a few mystically concealed sites – hidden loci and wellsprings of great power.

Yet all was not lost. Even as the Stormcast Eternals launched their lightning offensive across the realms, their actions stirred something that had all but lain dormant. From hidden vales and enchanted groves hope returned, springing up from seeds long left fallow. With the coming of the Age of Sigmar, once again the War of Life was renewed.

THE WAR OF LIFE

The jade kingdoms, also known as Ghyran, were once a fertile patchwork of lands. Each territory burst with its own bountiful cycles of life. Living mountains strode across eternal forests, geysers birthed spumes of birds, and glittering streams graced floating gardens, cascading down into silvery pools.

It was this blissful realm that called to Alarielle, heartsick Everqueen of a lost people. Although grateful to Sigmar for awakening her, Alarielle had grown estranged. She desired the company of neither mortal nor immortal, finding solace in nature alone. The siren song of the green paradise had lured in a new queen. After centuries wandering her new surroundings, Alarielle at last revealed her secret.

The Everqueen bore magical seeds harvested from the world-that-was. From place to place she scattered these seeds, sowing in the areas that delighted her most – amidst the

eldest of tree groves, in the spray of waterfalls and at the edges of flower-filled meadows. She was unsure how her crops would fare in this new land, so she sowed some seeds at twilight, others at sea; some beneath the first rays of dawn and a few wherever the winds might carry them.

From Alarielle's seeds grew soulpods, sprouting forth treefolk and all manner of aelven spirit beings. In the magical glades they flourished. New strains mixed, even springing up in the forests of other realms. Meanwhile Alarielle tended her widespread gardens and was at peace.

And then came the sickness. Forests rotted from the inside, and the filth of Chaos streamed forth in noxious waves.

Nurgle, the Lord of Decay, had long coveted those life-rich realms, wanting to claim them as his own. Although known for his deathly pestilences, Nurgle delights in the full, glorious cycle of life. Even a corpse can house wriggling maggots and contagions untold – some of the most fecund of all creations. Chortling greedily, Nurgle had unleashed his armies, seeking full dominion. Waves of daemons and mortals alike assailed Ghyran. The wars that followed were unlike any other...



THE SHIMMERFALL CAMPAIGN

The Shimmerfall Campaign is but a single example of the attacks unleashed by the minions of Nurgle upon the countless Jade Kingdoms that make up the Realm of Ghyran. All waterfalls in Ghyran are sacred, yet perhaps none more so than the Shimmerfalls of Gloriphus. The waters that cascaded from those floating isles were radiant and magical, giving life to the forest realms beyond. By corrupting the skyfalls, the pestilent armies sent poisons rather than life-giving water to the lower forest realms below.



BATTLE OF
HIGH FALL

Battles without number
have been fought over this
shimmerfall – neither side has
yet achieved victory.

SHIMMERFALL
OF MAJESTY

JADE ISLES

THE GREAT
DRONING



This was a
savage seven
day air war.

SKYOAK

THESE WERE ONCE
THE EMERALD FALLS

BATTLE OF
FALLEN OAK



ROTHEART

THE FALLS OF FILTH

BETRAYAL OF
THE WOODS



Some treefolk have rotted from the
inside, and here the traitors revealed
themselves, nearly capturing Alarielle
with their sudden betrayal.

MOUNT DRAKSUVIUS

WRATH OF THE
GLOTTKIN



It was here that
the twelve Ancient
Guardians fell.

GLADE OF
SUMMONING

HERE FELL THE GREAT SLAG

BATTLE OF
JADE CRYSTAL



HERE MARCH
THE SEVEN LEGIONS
OF SPLATCHLIK

BRIDGE OF
UNNUMBERED SORROWS

GORESPIRE

BLOOD
RITUAL

BETRAYAL OF
VERMINTIDE



GNAWHOLE

FROM HERE CAME THE SEVEN

POOL OF TRANQUILITY

ETERNITY WAYSTONE





THE REBELLION BEGINS

Tidings of armoured warriors from the heavens were whispered across the broken kingdoms, yet it was not until winged messengers appeared that hope truly began to spread. Seeking out the hidden enclaves of the free peoples, these heralds spoke openly of casting down the tyrants of Chaos.

As sudden as a flash of lightning, the Stormcast Eternals launched assaults against the Chaos oppressors. Everywhere the Mortal Realms burned with war, swift and terrible. By assailing the Realmgates, the Stormhosts opened up passages between kingdoms, freeing realm-spanning bridges previously accessible only to the enemy.

The unfurling of Stormcast banners over many Realmgates did not mark war's end, but only its beginning. Long had Sigmar prepared, and now, at last, he loosed war. This was battle on a scale

not seen since the days of the Ancient Alliance. Untold chambers of Stormcast Eternals descended until ground and sky alike shook with tumult.

Across the Mortal Realms, slave camps were broken and the oppressed unshackled. Monsters grown vast on the flesh of the weak were hunted down and slain. The most fearsome retribution of all, however, was saved for those tribes who had willingly submitted to the Dark Gods. For them alone was reserved a burning and incandescent vengeance.

Swift and merciless were the assaults upon the traitors of mankind. In their wake, the Stormcast Eternals left behind only the broken bodies of the their foes, ruined corpses scattered amidst the toppled idols of their foul and unspeakable gods.

'Much is demanded of those to whom much is given.'

- First Canticle of the Hallowed Knights



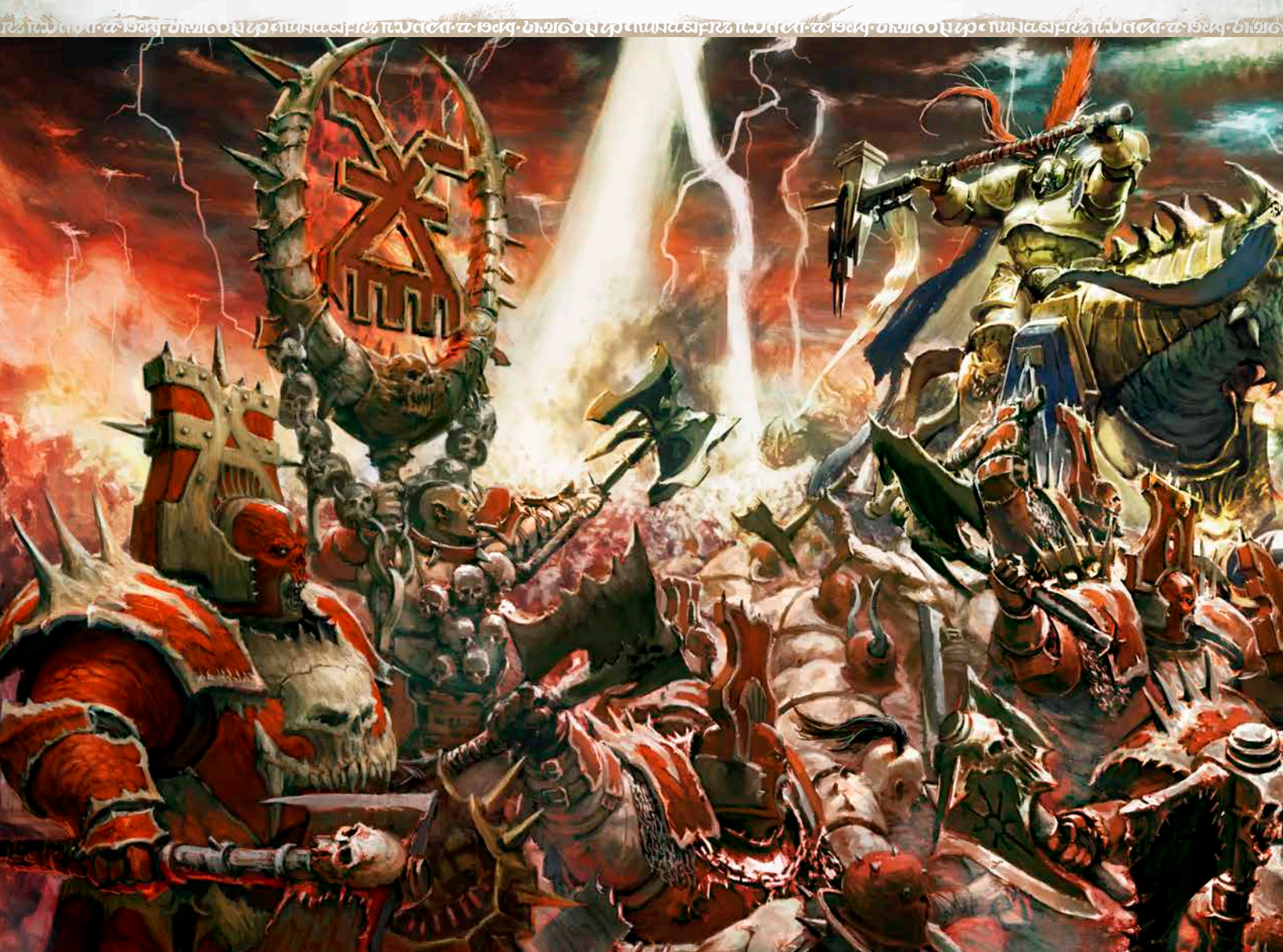
Led by battalions of Prosecutors, the Stormcast Eternals of the Hammers of Sigmar reclaimed the cloud-piercing towers that overlooked the slave camps at Dolgotha.



The orruks greeted the Stormcast Eternals not as liberators, but as more fodder for their choppas. Although they did not seek to battle mankind's one-time allies, the Stormhosts would let none stay their righteous wrath.



The Stormcast Eternals were forged for war, an amalgam of fury and divine retribution garbed in armour of shining sigmarite. None shall stand before them or their almighty vengeance.





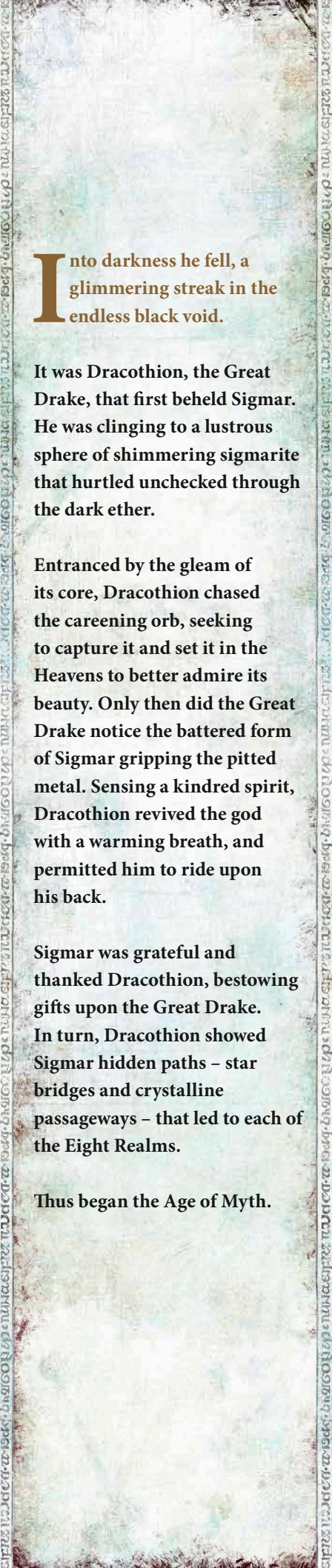
Borne upon the wings of the tempest, Sigmar's warrior heralds appear in the skies above every Mortal Realm. Their message is one of inescapable violence and summary justice meted out from above.





THE LOST AGES





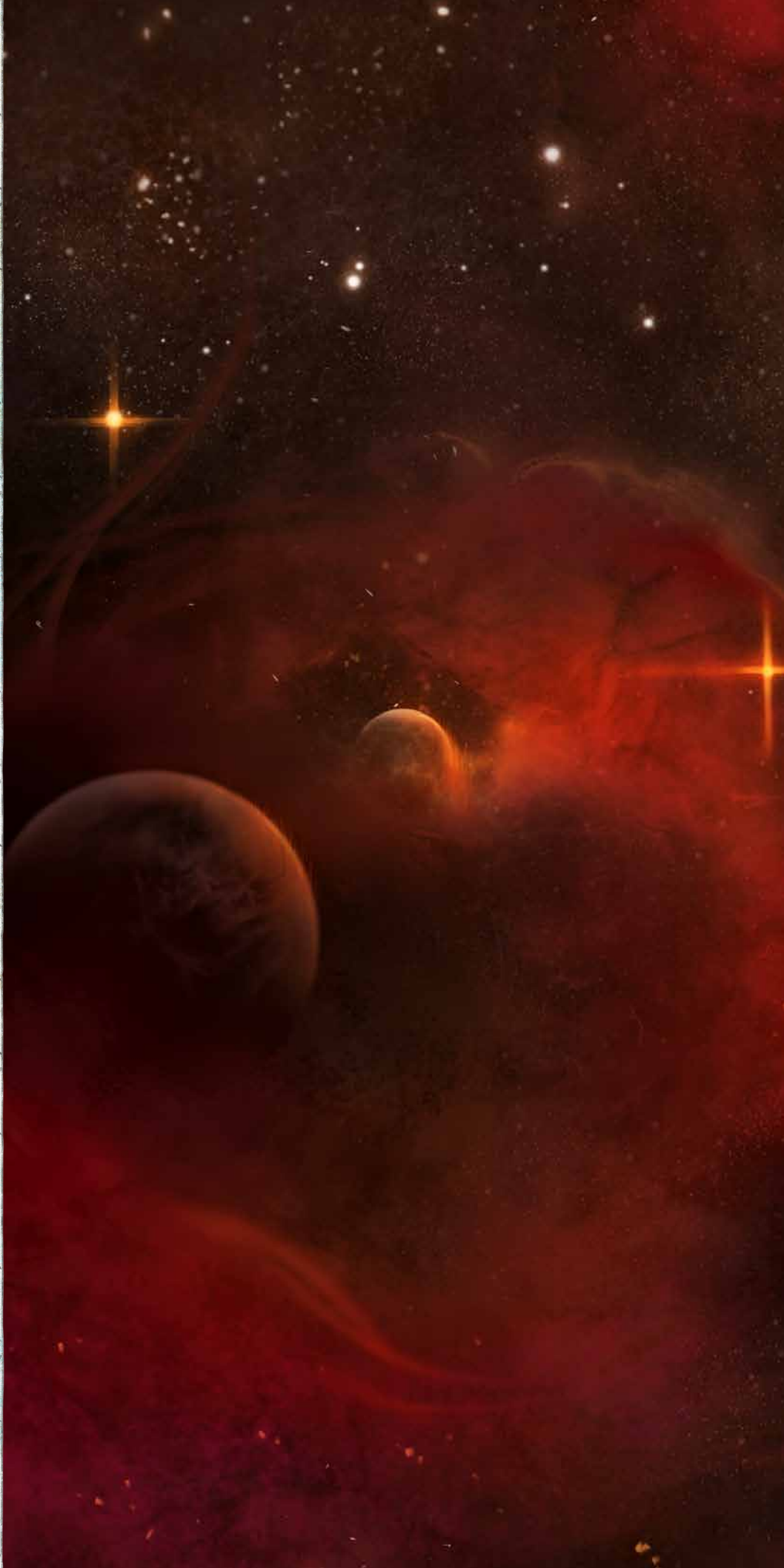
Into darkness he fell, a
glimmering streak in the
endless black void.

It was Dracothion, the Great Drake, that first beheld Sigmar. He was clinging to a lustrous sphere of shimmering sigmarite that hurtled unchecked through the dark ether.

Entranced by the gleam of its core, Dracothion chased the careening orb, seeking to capture it and set it in the Heavens to better admire its beauty. Only then did the Great Drake notice the battered form of Sigmar gripping the pitted metal. Sensing a kindred spirit, Dracothion revived the god with a warming breath, and permitted him to ride upon his back.

Sigmar was grateful and thanked Dracothion, bestowing gifts upon the Great Drake. In turn, Dracothion showed Sigmar hidden paths – star bridges and crystalline passageways – that led to each of the Eight Realms.

Thus began the Age of Myth.





THE GREAT EPOCHS

The different kingdoms and peoples of the Eight Realms have their own unique ways to mark time and record their history. There are three distinct ages, however, that overshadow everything, and it is these great epochs that have most shaped the Eight Realms.

THE AGE OF MYTH

After awakening from his drifting in the void, Sigmar embarked on great voyages of discovery, exploring each of the Eight Realms. He journeyed long and far, finding enclaves of primitive humans and overcoming monstrous beasts. Sigmar taught mankind many things, and they worshipped him. Civilisations rose, and in a few generations hunters with flint-tipped weapons ceased wandering and instead erected great spired cities. Guided by inner knowledge and fate itself, Sigmar found or awakened other gods – with mixed consequences. It is difficult to discern fact from apocryphal tale, as this era is intertwined with myths and legends. The glory of that lost age can still be glimpsed when some relic or crumbled architecture is uncovered. The secrets of such splendours, however, have been crushed beneath the heel of Chaos oppression or hidden away by the gods themselves.

THE AGE OF CHAOS

The Age of Chaos began in blood and betrayal. So devastating were the first invasions that people would later know them as the Red Century. Armies were mustered to halt them, but with old alliances shattered, and every faction fearing further treachery, no single power could stand before the forces of the Dark Gods. Even with Slaanesh mysteriously missing, the forces of the Chaos Gods swept across the Mortal Realms. Before their onslaught, cities crumbled and empires were destroyed, whole civilisations and their ancient histories annihilated overnight. It was a dark age that swallowed enlightenment and spat out in its place cruelty, enslavement and despair. The realms returned to savage states, the ruins of the brief utopia buried beneath the weight of wars untold. So complete was the dominion of Chaos that their own forces turned upon each other – fighting amongst themselves over the spoil heaps of their victory.

BRIEF UTOPIA

GRATEFUL TO BE AWOKEN, MANY GODS PLEDGED TO AID SIGMAR AND THE NASCENT CIVILISATIONS. A GOLDEN AGE FOLLOWED, A TIME OF COOPERATION. ELDRITCH TEMPESTS BROUGHT THE TAIN OF CHAOS, BUT THESE EARLY ATTACKS WERE REPULSED BY THE STRONG UNION OF MANY PEOPLES AND THEIR GODS. ONLY WHEN THE ALLIANCE FALTERED DID A NEW AGE BEGIN.

THE HEAVENS CLOSE

MIDWAY THROUGH THE AGE OF CHAOS THE FORCES OF LIGHT SUFFERED A SERIES OF DISASTROUS DEFEATS – AND IN ONE OF THEM, SIGMAR LOST GHAL MARAZ. FURIOUS, HE RETREATED TO THE CELESTIAL REALM, AND ORDERED THE GATES OF AZYR SEALED. HE RETIRED TO HIS CELESTIAL PALACE-CITY AND WAS NOT SEEN AGAIN FOR CENTURIES.



AZYRHEIM

THE ONLY ONE OF THE GREAT CITIES TO SURVIVE THE AGE OF CHAOS WAS AZYRHEIM, ALSO KNOWN AS THE CITY OF HOPE. IT STANDS IN THE HEART OF THE CELESTIAL REALM, DIRECTLY BENEATH SIGENDIL, THE HIGH STAR. ITS GATE WAS THE LAST TO BE SEALED BY SIGMAR, AND MANY REFUGEES FROM BESIEGED REALMS SOUGHT SAFETY BEHIND THE CITY'S WALLS, THERE TO SHELTER FROM THE DARK POWERS WITHOUT.

HERALDS OF WAR

EVEN AS WORD SPREAD OF THE STORMCAST ETERNALS' FIRST VICTORIES AGAINST THE FORCES OF CHAOS, WINGED MESSENGERS SENT FROM SIGMAR SOUGHT OUT THE OTHER POWERS OF THE EIGHT REALMS. DESPITE THE BETRAYALS OF THE PAST, IT WAS SIGMAR'S INTENT TO REUNITE THE OLD ALLIANCE FROM THE AGE OF MYTH.

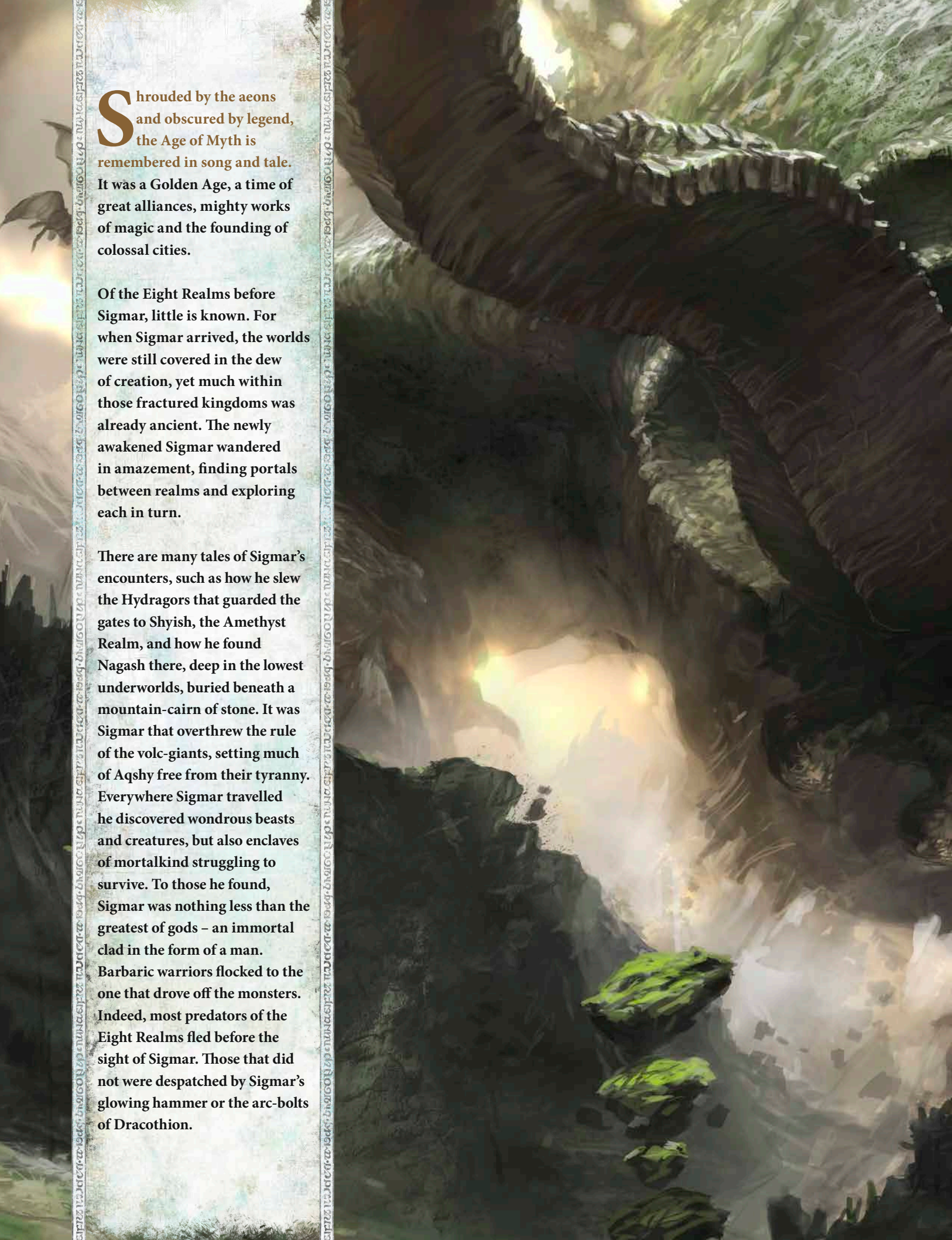
THE AGE OF SIGMAR

Born of lightning and sudden war, the Age of Sigmar has only just begun. For centuries Sigmar had prepared, marshalling his great strength. At long last the God-King unleashed his Stormhosts. Shining and resplendent, the armoured might of the Stormcast Eternals launched a new era with their spearhead assaults to open the Realmgates. These marked the first counter-strikes in a new war to throw off the dominion of Chaos. In the wake of the Stormcast attacks, other armies raised their banners and wars on multiple fronts spread across every region of the Mortal Realms. Thus began a violent new age.

The Chaos forces had always known resistance, but it had been many years since any unified effort had dared to defy the dominance of their dark masters. Now, untold attacks raged across seven of the eight realms, challenging the right of Chaos to rule. Yet the mortal forces of Chaos were mighty still, and they did not fight alone. The echoes of those battles raging across the Mortal Realms reverberated across the Realm of Chaos. Bitterly, the Dark Gods realised total victory was not yet theirs for the taking. The skies shook and the ground trembled at the roar of the Chaos powers' disapproval, and countless reinforcements from beyond crashed through the veil of reality to join the growing conflagration.

THE REALMGATE WARS

EVERY AVAILABLE CHAMBER OF STORMCAST ETERNALS WAS SENT TO WAR IN STRIKES AIMED AT SECURING REALMGATES. MANY OF THE BATTLES THAT FOLLOWED GREW IN SCALE AND FEROCITY AS DEFENDERS POURED FORTH. OF THE BATTLE AT THE GATES OF DAWN THE STORMCAST ETERNALS DO NOT SPEAK, SO GRIEVOUS WERE THEIR LOSSES THERE.



Shrouded by the aeons
and obscured by legend,
the Age of Myth is
remembered in song and tale.

It was a Golden Age, a time of great alliances, mighty works of magic and the founding of colossal cities.

Of the Eight Realms before Sigmar, little is known. For when Sigmar arrived, the worlds were still covered in the dew of creation, yet much within those fractured kingdoms was already ancient. The newly awakened Sigmar wandered in amazement, finding portals between realms and exploring each in turn.

There are many tales of Sigmar's encounters, such as how he slew the Hydragors that guarded the gates to Shyish, the Amethyst Realm, and how he found Nagash there, deep in the lowest underworlds, buried beneath a mountain-cairn of stone. It was Sigmar that overthrew the rule of the volc-giants, setting much of Aqshy free from their tyranny. Everywhere Sigmar travelled he discovered wondrous beasts and creatures, but also enclaves of mortalkind struggling to survive. To those he found, Sigmar was nothing less than the greatest of gods – an immortal clad in the form of a man. Barbaric warriors flocked to the one that drove off the monsters. Indeed, most predators of the Eight Realms fled before the sight of Sigmar. Those that did not were despatched by Sigmar's glowing hammer or the arc-bolts of Dracothion.





THE GREAT ALLIANCE

In the realm of Hysh, Tyrion was jolted awake. Groggy from his long entrancement, only slowly did Tyrion remember who he was. Certainly things were not as they had been, for he was no longer bound to the trappings of mortal flesh, but had been elevated to something yet loftier – a god of light, the Lord of Lumination.

Although he could no longer see, Tyrion felt the glowing presence of his brother Teclis beside him. He too had survived the downfall of the world-that-was. Without knowing how or why, Tyrion understood the Realm of Hysh was now theirs to shape as well as to serve and protect. Tyrion awakened his brother and discovered he could see through Teclis' eyes. Together,

they explored this radiant new world. Astonished by the strange lands and creatures, Tyrion and Teclis grew ever more desperate to discover some of their own kind, yet they found none.

When Tyrion and Teclis chanced upon Sigmar, they rejoiced to find anything familiar, and yet that joy turned to despair as they learned that outside of the city of Azyrheim, the other realms bore no signs of aelfkind. Each readily swore oaths to join Sigmar, following him to the Realm of Azyr to join his growing pantheon of gods.

Long years of travelling followed before Sigmar returned to the Heavens of Azyr. There, he summoned the mightiest of those he had met upon

his journey. It was a union of power unlike anything seen before, for Sigmar assembled a diverse pantheon that included gods, demigods, and even zodiacal monsters. To house that conclave, Sigmar levelled the top of the Mount Celestian, the greatest of all summits. With the stars shining around them, each of the invitees took their place and the high council was convened.

Despite their differences – and that many of the gods were arch-enemies of old – an accord was struck between them. Each of the Eight Realms was appointed a protector, and various domains and borders agreed. Furthermore, oaths of alliance were taken, and a golden age truly began.



THE LANDS OF GREY SHADOW

The being that awoke in shifting shadow was confused. Gone was his physical form and only slowly did memory of the world's ending return. He could not control his solidity, which frustrated him. How long he wandered alone across a dreary greyscape he knew not, but he feared his fate was to forever be less than shadow. Yet as his anger mounted, his own rage gave him form. With his fury came greater corporeality and thus Malerion explored the thirteen domains of Ulgu, the Realm of Shadow. He discovered many creatures, yet could find none of his kind. Only when Malerion came upon a glade of shadow daemons did he feel the spark of recognition. At the centre of that bacchanal was his mother. Morathi was still flesh and blood, but changed. Theirs was a reunion full of recriminations and anger. Neither trusted the other, but an uneasy truce was reached. Together they united under Sigmar, joining the Great Alliance.



With the aid of the gods, many new settlements grew across the Eight Realms. Grungni taught mankind metalcraft, and Nagash imposed order on the spirits of the dead while his mindless deadwalkers helped build defensive edifices. Cities rose quickly, sprouting from the spoil wastes of the Realm of Chamon, to the harsh hinterlands of Ghur. Trade flourished between realms, and, although dangers untold were discovered, they were each overcome by the powerful alliance.

Even then, however, cracks were forming in the foundations of this new utopia. Several within Sigmar's pantheon were already drifting. Most fractious of all was Gorkamorka, the twin-headed deity of the greenskins. Growing weary of the continual unrest he caused, Sigmar tasked Gorkamorka

with clearing out the wild countries. For a time, the role of monster-hunter suited this most belligerent of gods, and he cleared the Ghurland plains. Meanwhile Alarielle grew yet more distant, for she pined for the lost world-that-was. Now she desired only to nurture her strange crops. Alarielle's reclusion within the Realm of Life grew longer and longer, and she rued returning to the Vault Celestial for councils and endless bickering.

Although they aided the newfound civilisations, foremost in the minds of Malerion and Tyrion was the search for their own race. No further trace of aelfkind could be found, yet in their waking dreams both heard far-off, anguished cries; the sounds the damned might make under the most unimaginable of torments.

The tale of Malerion and Tyrion's quest is convoluted, for the plots of the Dark Gods were woven within it. At the ending of the world-that-was, Slaanesh, the Dark Prince of Chaos, had consumed too many spirits, feasting and feasting with wanton abandon. Yet always more souls were drawn to him, until he was overwhelmed. After the world-storm subsided, Slaanesh was left bloated and helpless. The over-satiated Chaos God withdrew to a hidden lair in the hopes of digesting his great meal. As secretive as he was, however, Slaanesh did not escape the plotting of Tzeentch, who manipulated Khorne and the two newly born aelf gods.

Thus, in pursuing their own goals and capturing Slaanesh, Malerion and Tyrion failed of their duties to Sigmar, further weakening the Great Alliance.

METAL & FIRE

While exploring Chamon, Sigmar climbed the Iron Mountains. Upon the highest summit he found two gods fettered. Of how Grungni and Grimnir came to be there, they would not speak. Once freed, both duardin gods pledged oaths to their liberator.

How each god repaid his debt tells much of their character. Grungni was a master of metalcraft, the forgefather of his race. Now crippled in form, Grungni vowed to settle his debt through craftsmanship, offering to fabricate whatever Sigmar desired. Grimnir, however, was no warsmith but a warrior god. He asked Sigmar to name a foe worthy of his blades, for Grimnir was hot-blooded and wished to repay his debt immediately.

Grungni gathered his scattered folk and established the Iron Karak. Meanwhile, his estranged brother Grimnir strode alone to the Hills of Aqshy. There he sought to hunt down the fire wyrm named by Sigmar, which had terrorised that region. The creature Grimnir tracked to its lair was Vulcatrix, the Mother of Salamanders, the mythic creature that first birthed flame into the worlds. Endlessly the fire wyrm uncoiled from its molten abyss, rising to tower over the duardin warrior-god. The very air shimmered and crackled. Undaunted, Grimnir hefted his axes and charged.

The titanic clash that followed lives on as legend, for it flattened the surrounding hills and created the Plains of Aqshy. As Vulcatrix encircled Grimnir, his beard and crest burst aflame, but the god's rage burned hotter still. Seven times the blades of Grimnir sliced through the molten scales of Vulcatrix, and magma spilled from her wounds. In return, the Ur-Salamander raked her foe many times. Neither would submit, and as the intensity of their battle grew, so too did the raging inferno that surrounded them.

In a final tumultuous clash, the combatants smashed headlong into one another, shattering god and beast alike. Broken shards hurtled out across the void as a rain of blazing meteors. Where the hot coals of Vulcatrix landed there hatched a new volcano. As for the flaming fragments of Grimnir, what happened to them is a revelation the duardin share with no one.







THE GREEN HORDES

As Sigmar traversed the Eight Realms he discovered that each land he visited was already infested with orruks and their diminutive cousins, the grots. He knew that they would make powerful – if dangerously erratic – allies to mankind's burgeoning new civilizations.

Orruks and grots alike are warlike and unpredictable creatures; their races are collectively known as greenskins. They are divided into a number of unruly tribes that can be found scattered across every realm. The tribes regularly war upon anyone or anything in their vicinity, including their own kind. Such creatures fight for dominance, territory, and perhaps most of all, for the sheer joy of battle.

Orruks embody the brutal philosophy of might is right, and will only follow a leader whose extreme feats of physical

GORKAMORKA

The greenskins worship many deities, but outstripping all cults and minor idols is the almighty Gorkamorka. At the height of the Great Waaagh! Gorkamorka was a two-headed, club-wielding brute, but he later split into two separate entities, one favouring ferocity (Gork) and the other trickery (Mork). So Gorkamorka remains, sometimes two feuding beings, at others a united god.

violence are truly impressive. Orruk armies can vary widely, as all manner of like-minded creatures are attracted to greenskin hordes. They are drawn by the prospect of constant fighting and rapacious raids. Troggoths, Aleguzzlers and other ravenous monsters join the raucous campsites, eager to partake in the warfare and pillaging that they know will soon follow any such gathering. Ogors – hulking brutes who likewise live to eat and fight – can typically be found in the same regions as orruks, often going to war alongside the greenskins.

SAVAGE ORRUKS

Some orruks forswear advancement, preferring instead to follow tradition and 'da old ways'. That boots and weapons made of metal are considered too modern for these barbaric tribes speaks volumes about just how atavistic these greenskins can be. Orruks who follow this primitive practice can be distinguished by their near-nakedness, ritual piercings, garish warpaint and strange fetishes. They are an especially superstitious lot, and perform strange rites before battle, led by their ju-ju doks – mystic shamans whose word, no matter how bizarre, is law. Mobs of such orruks often attach themselves to greenskin armies, although entire tribes of these savages on the march are not an uncommon sight.





CLASH OF IRRESISTIBLE FORCES

Sigmar discovered Gorkamorka in the Realm of Beasts. The twin-headed god of the greenskins was trapped within Drakatoa, the living avalanche that ruled Ghyrria. Suspended in the primordial muck of that amber-massed monster, Gorkamorka could bring neither his mountain-shattering might nor his base cunning into play.

Although he suspected his actions might cause further trouble, Sigmar urged Dracothion into a downward plummet. Streaking from the skies like a falling comet, Sigmar bellowed his war cry. Between the Great Drake's cosmic lightnings and thunder-blows from Ghal Maraz, Drakatoa was driven back.

Gorkamorka was pleased to be freed, yet he was also infuriated – never before had he been so trapped, never before had he required aid. As a creature of violent emotions, his natural reaction was to attack. And attack he did. Hefting up his war club, the twin-headed greenskin deity swung a blow that knocked Dracothion senseless. Moved to ire by this

senseless assault, Sigmar arose from his downed steed and began what turned into a twelve-day battle. The tumult of the two gods trading blows shook the Eight Realms. When Sigmar flung down his foe, it cast up the Mountains of Maraz, while the scattered Gouge Canyons were made from errant strikes from Gorkamorka's colossal club. Myriad predatory beasts came forth, drawn by the scent of blood, but such was the spectacle that sunwurm and Shaggoth stood side-by-side – the most hostile creatures agog at the fury and sheer destructive force unleashed before them.

Even gods grow weary. At last, leaning on weapons and panting, both gods eyed each other across the ruined surroundings. Seeing the wreckage they had wrought upon the landscape, and the onlooking audience of ferocious monsters that their battle had drawn, each began to grin, and then laugh – the harsh guffaws of the greenskin god mixing with the booming roars of Sigmar. Seeing that this strong-armed god had matched his own battle-lust, Gorkamorka clasped the man-god's hand and agreed to fight alongside Sigmar, rather than against him.

THE GREAT WAAAGH!

The fragile alliance between the greenskins and the other realmfolk was not destined to last long. When the greenskins at last broke the peace, they did so in a spectacular flurry of bloody violence.

As requested by the God-council, Gorkamorka led his greenskins into the wilds – exploring the dark corners of the Eight Realms. They were constantly forced to battle monstrous beasts, and fighting these innumerable threats kept the belligerent nature of the orrorks and grots partially satisfied. Yet it was not enough. Gorkamorka grew tired of the tedious orders and the laws of his fellow gods, and at last could take no more.

Greenskin aggression cannot be bottled up or directed. With no warning, Gorkamorka snapped – howling an almighty bellow. The deep-throated roar of ‘Waaagh!’ shook the skies, a war cry that sent the greenskins to new heights of aggression. The invasion that followed smashed everything, a living landslide of violence that swept away monsters and former allies alike. Cities were crushed, armies were trampled. The greenskin crusade swept from one end of the Eight Realms to the other, leaving behind a wake of utter devastation. Upon reaching the edge of nothingness – the abyssal World’s End – Gorkamorka turned about and set off to do it again, smashing over civilisations even as they were rebuilt from the last round of devastation.

The Great Waaagh! ended only when the greenskin tribes became mired in endless internal squabbles. Gorkamorka himself fractured into two beings, and both succumbed to the infighting so characteristic of their barbaric kind. Since that day, Gorkamorka has reformed again several times, each episode heralding another Waaagh! which would unite nearby orruk hordes into a wave of destruction. The following greenskin incursions were not as mighty or long-lived as the first invasion, however, and soon split apart once again.





THE AGE OF CHAOS

As the union of Sigmar's pantheon began to pull itself apart, other forces were already preparing invading armies. Grim portents foretold of disasters to come, but the details were clouded even from the gods themselves. All that Sigmar had strived for was about to come crashing down...

While the Age of Myth unfolded, other eyes were fixed upon the Eight Realms. From beyond reality, the Chaos Gods watched, their gaze jealously following Sigmar's explorations. Greedily they looked upon new creatures to corrupt and new cultures to conquer. Khorne, Tzeentch, Nurgle and even soul-gorged Slaanesh coveted what they saw, each desiring to claim these ripe new lands.

Before the Chaos powers could invade, they first had to breach the barrier between their own realm and reality. Once this was done, the minions of the Dark Gods found the Eight Realms saturated with the magical energies needed to sustain them.

Only the mightiest of greater daemons proved able to plough through the veil between realms. Even the fissures they tore were temporary, as the fabric of space and time re-stitched itself, once again closing off reality from the perilous realm beyond. Still, passages were forced, and daemons like Ghorgrax, commander of Khorne's Rage Legion, and Kairos Fateweaver, Oracle of Tzeentch, led horrific invasions into the Eight Realms.

At first, the Chaos attacks were short-lived – launched by slaughter-seeking armies that quickly dwindled in numbers, if not in insane ferocity or arcane prowess. Throughout the Age

of Myth this gradually altered, as the Chaos Gods combined their powers and larger rents were forced through the barrier, allowing more daemon legions to spill into the lands.

Through heroism and strength of arms, the forces of Order were able to vanquish their unnatural foes throughout the Age of Myth. Yet slowly more and more rifts were opened. The increased pressure of these relentless attacks exposed the cracks growing in Sigmar's alliance. And then came the greatest invasions, vast armies that began grinding campaigns, ushering in a harsh and brutal new era. An epoch of Chaos domination had arrived.





For many years after the capture and imprisonment of Slaanesh, the remaining Chaos powers feuded, each attempting to seize a larger portion of the Dark Prince's territories. Much was taken, yet the three were ever greedy for more. At long last, Khorne, Tzeentch and Nurgle turned their full attention to a far richer prize... the Eight Realms.

Thus far, Sigmar's alliance had thwarted the disparate actions of the Dark Gods' minions. It was ever-scheming Tzeentch that pushed for a combined invasion into the Eight Realms. Khorne and Nurgle were wary of their manipulative brother, and each of the gods wanted his own lieutenant to lead any alliance. The dispute threatened to devolve back to internecine warfare. Only the suggestion that the mortal champion Archaon command the invasion kept the fell powers together.

With their efforts united, the Age of Chaos truly began. A mighty rent was gouged through the barrier between realms, and daemon legions beyond count poured forth from the Realm of Chaos. They found their leader, Archaon, ender of worlds and the greatest of mortal generals, waiting to lead them. Behind him stood ironclad ranks of Chaos Warriors, bloodthirsty barbarians and savage beast herds.

It was Archaon's intention to seize the nexus of travel, the bridge called the Allpoints that spanned reality. Each realm held a single arcway – an arched portal that led to a mystic bridge that crossed the void to each of the other realms. Vast cities and fortresses had sprung up around these arcways, for they guarded the largest, most stable of passageways between the Eight Realms. Thus began the Nexus Wars, and history itself held its breath.

With numerous feints and forced marches, Archaon masterminded the attacks that simultaneously threatened all eight of the Allpoints gateways. Each of the realms saw a series of bloody battles as the Chaos forces fought their way through walled cities and towering defences. Staving off catastrophe, the warriors and gods of Sigmar's alliance rushed to aid those imperilled.

Long were those battles, and hard fought. Each side boasted of great deeds and each also bore bitter defeats. It was a war of legends, when the gods themselves waded forth into the fray to aid their children and followers. Yet even as the forces of Chaos wavered near the breaking point, the Shyish Arcway was taken, and the fighting spilled onto the Allpoints – the bridge to everywhere. It was betrayal that broke the stalemate, ushering in all of the disasters that followed.



WAR OF HEAVEN AND THE UNDERWORLDS

Sigmar's alliance had been battered by Gorkamorka, treated as peripheral by Tyrion, actively subverted by Malerion, and all but forgotten by Alarielle. When the forces of Death suddenly turned upon Sigmar's army at the Allpoints' Shyish Arcway, it was too much for Sigmar to bear. Perhaps the realm-spanning bridge could have been defended, but Sigmar left, overcome with rage by Nagash's betrayal.

Leaving behind the diplomatic God-King that he had become, Sigmar reverted to his aspect as a barbarian warrior god of old. Even as the Chaos forces captured the Allpoints, corrupting the realm-bridge, Sigmar stormed Shyish, the Amethyst Realm. This would come to be known as the War of Heaven and the Underworlds.

All across Shyish Sigmar sought his betrayer. Before the gates of each different underworld, Sigmar bellowed his challenge, naming Nagash craven, calling him traitor and deceiver both.

Emissaries from the self-claimed God of Death were smashed to bone-dust before their messages could be delivered. The Spirit Hosts and Flesh-eater armies that emerged could not slow the righteous wrath of Sigmar. In other realms, civilisations were already starting to fall beneath the bloodthirsty Chaos onslaught, yet their protector god did not hear their desperate pleas – his berserker fury was not yet spent.

Despite many victories, Sigmar could not bring Nagash to justice. Twice Sigmar had the Great Necromancer at bay, crossing weapons with his betrayer, but each time Nagash employed dark sorcery to escape. As Sigmar battered his way through armies of living dead, his red fury gradually subsided. His own messengers – long neglected – bore urgent requests from the beleaguered realms. With his vengeance unfulfilled, Sigmar turned his back upon the Amethyst Realm, leading his armies to salvage what he could from the Chaos ravagers.

By the time Sigmar returned to fight against Archaon's hordes, the Allpoints had fallen, and a Chaos tide flowed across the lands. The Allpoints itself was completely corrupted, becoming the Eightpoints, a direct route from the Realm of Chaos.

A century of slaughter followed, as malefic forces without number poured into the Mortal Realms. A spearhead of Bloodthirsters cracked the walled city of Ulgarod, flooding its streets with gore. The city of Chamontarg was defenceless against the Pandaemoniad of Tzeentch, and every citizen was transmuted to stone. Rotplague wiped out the greatest civilisations of Ghyran. The last of the great kingdoms of mankind – the Lantic Empire – was crushed beneath the iron tread of Archaon.

Despair ruled. The lands themselves crumbled around the edges, reality beginning to disappear into a sea of madness, a new Realm of Chaos.

No realm was better defended than Shyish, the Realm of Death. Many claim that Nagash made a pact with the Dark Gods, betraying Sigmar's alliance in exchange for promises the Chaos invasion would not enter the underworlds. If this was indeed Nagash's bargain, then he too was betrayed. For even as Sigmar marched out seeking vengeance, another threat surfaced to challenge Nagash's supremacy.

With perfect timing, the skaven rose from newly gnawed tunnels, unleashing their vermin-hordes and their full arsenal of hellish weaponry upon Nagash's remaining strongholds. Although this War of Bones was ultimately fought to a standstill, it left Nagash further weakened. The Great Necromancer was in no shape to withstand Archaon and his forces when they marched through the Allpoints to claim victory.





THE THREAT BELOW...

The skaven are a race of malevolent ratmen. They are found tunnelling beneath the Eight Realms, undermining the crumbling ruins of civilisation. Despite their multitudes, the skaven remain largely unseen, their armies held in check, awaiting the moment when their foes are most vulnerable.

The skaven are forever gnawing – at old bones, at the loose ends of sinister plots, even at the fabric of reality itself. As a race, they are a corrupting presence – decay and entropy made manifest. And so it has always been.

Since before time, the skaven have followed a repeated pattern, albeit sporadically. They fight amongst themselves, expand their Under-Empire, multiply their enormous population and then surge to the surface, unleashing sudden and horrific war. Eventually those teeming tides of ratmen ebb, most often due to violent treachery between their own clans, rather than any external factor. After each implosive defeat, the skaven skulk back to their lairs and the irregular cycle begins anew.

Skaven legends tell of a time when it was they who ruled supreme, when their deity – the Great Horned Rat – was invited into the pantheon of the Dark Gods. It was then that Blight City, the sprawling skaven capital, was merged into the Realm of Chaos. Yet disaster struck soon after, when the ratmen attempted to expand further.

Their arcane machinery, powerful but wayward, went awry, and the resulting implosion warped and twisted Blight City. It sank to the edges of the Realm of Chaos, a purgatorial existence that straddled reality. The skaven are adaptable, however, and from this position they gnawed tunnels into the Mortal Realms and beyond.

SUBTERRANEAN SLAUGHTER

The skaven were instrumental in Archaon's victory in the Allpoints War, as well as in Chaos triumphs throughout the Red Century. However, the seizure of so much land and so many slaves caused contention amongst the skaven. Internal rivalries and the unexpected rise of the zealous Clan Pestilens sparked fiercer than usual internecine fighting. The bloodshed escalated – stoked by agents of Tzeentch – into all-consuming civil war that spread through the skaven lairs. These conflicts and back-stabbings have overshadowed all other endeavours as the clans vie for dominance.





SKAVEN CLANS

A hierarchal order of clans rules Skaven society. All aspects of life are violent, ever changing and dominated by the struggle to not just survive, but to rise into ascendancy. As lowly slaves seek to better their station, so too do tyrannical warlords, making for a treacherous landscape of doublecrosses that traverses every strata and overshadows every action.

The Verminus Clans are the most numerous, formed of petty overlords and teeming hordes beyond count. Despite their multitudes, those clans pale in importance before the Greater Clans. Each of the famed Greater Clans has its own specialisation, troops, armaments, and methods of waging war. Ostensibly ruling over all is the Council of Thirteen, twelve leaders from the most powerful clans headed by the Great Horned Rat himself.







Proud and glittering, Azyrheim is the Great Bastion of Order, and from out of its gleaming gates pour armies of retribution.

Azyrheim is known by many names, and is home to many different peoples. Amongst its titles are the Eternal City, the First City and the City of the Lost. It is the last of its kind, for the realms' other great cities have crumbled beneath the Chaos onslaught. Directly above the walled city, far up in the mystic nimbus of the Heavens, shines the High Star Sigendil, beacon of the palace of Sigmar.

It was Sigmar who founded Azyrheim. Legends tell that he first alighted from the Heavens in that wide vale between the encircling mountains. Seen from the distant peaks, Azyrheim appears as a shimmer – its elegant spires radiating back the blue of the heavens. All who travel there are awed by the city's scale and magnificence.

Behind high walls and seven gates of gold dwell the teeming denizens of Azyrheim. Before Sigmar ordered the Gates of Azyr shut, refugees from all realms had fled there, seeking safety. The newcomers swelled what was already a vast and diverse population that included entire armies from the world-that-was. In Azyrheim mankind, aelf and duardin of different nations live in peaceful coexistence, united by their common hatred of Chaos and their dreams of one day reclaiming their lost lands.

AFTER MANY
DISASTERS DEFENDING
THE REALMS, SIGMAR
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THERE, HE ORDERED SHUT THE
GATES OF AZYR, AND THE
GOD-KING WAS NOT SEEN
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AZYR AGAIN.





BENEATH THE GREAT
PALACE OF SIGMAR THE BROKEN
WORLD SPUN ON. SHORN OF ITS
MANTLE, IT WAS LUMPEN AND UNLOVELY,
YET THE CORE MIMICKED THE GLORIOUS
PLANET THAT IT ONCE WAS, CASTING ECHOES
OF ITS PAST LIFE. IN ITS DAY PHASE THE CORE
WAS BRIGHT, ITS ENERGIES FULL OF LIGHT AND
PURITY. DURING SUCH TIME SIGMAR WAS FULL OF
PROMISE AND RIGHTEOUS WRATH. IN ITS NIGHT
PHASE, THE WORLD TURNED DARK, A SULLEN
PLACE FULL OF DESTRUCTIVE POWERS. THEN DID
SIGMAR BECOME LIKEWISE BLACK OF MOOD,
OVERCOME BY A VENGEFUL BROODING.
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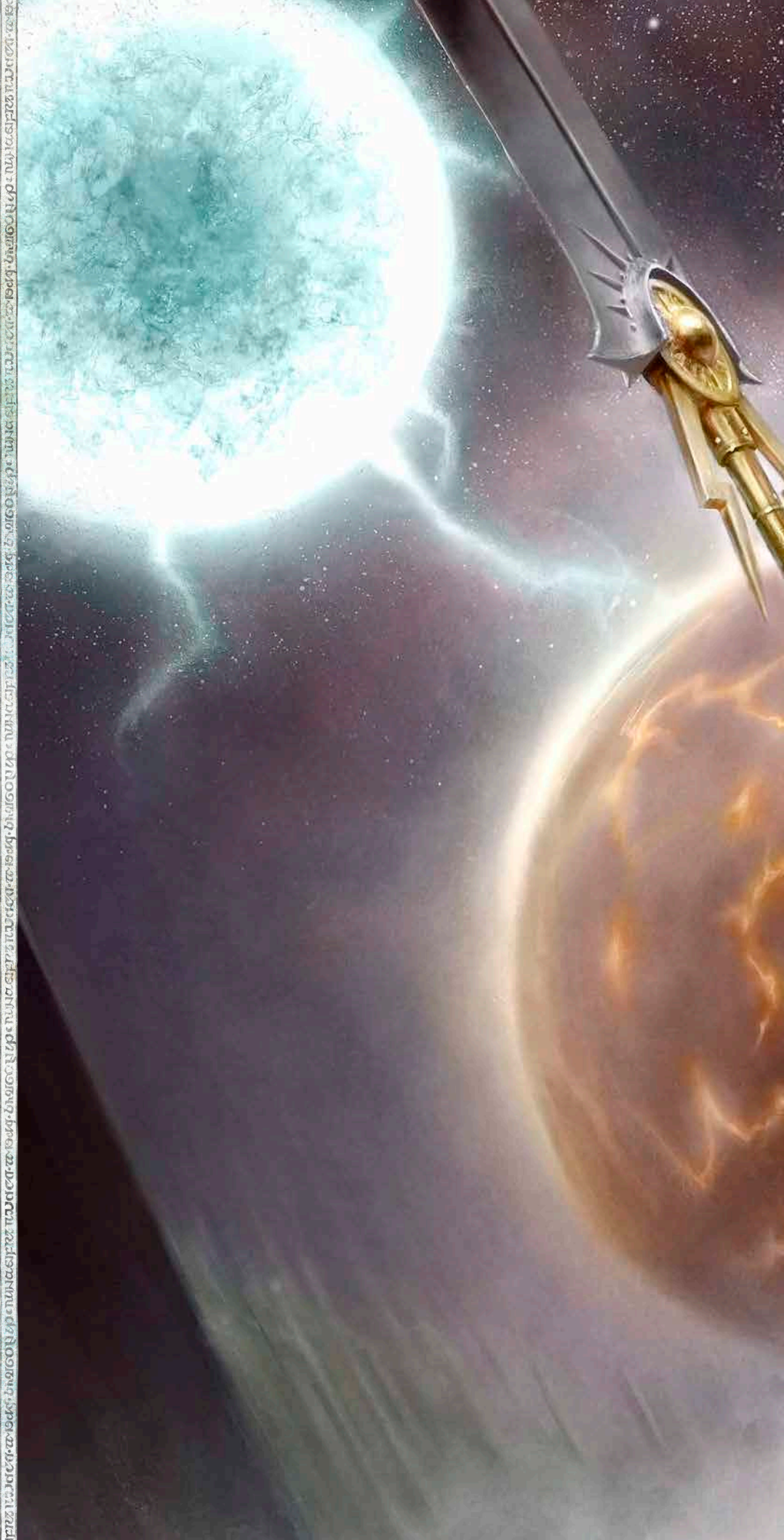
A RING WAS BUILT,
ROUND THE BROKEN WORLD;
WHERE SAT THE CELESTIAL
PALACES BUILT OF STONE; HIGH
STANDING, THE BLOCKS SO LARGE
ONLY A GIGHEMOTH COULD
HEFT THEM. SO DID SIGMAR'S
FASTNESS GROW...

IN SIGMARON,
GREAT STRONGHOLD OF SIGMAR,
THE PALACE OF THE HEAVENS;
THERE SHINES SIGENDIL,
THE HIGH STAR;
AND DARK DHARROTH
GLOOMS THERE ALSO.
LOUD RING THE FORGES
OF THE SIX SMITHS;
GREAT ARMIES ARE BUILT,
AWAITING ONLY
THE CALL TO BATTLE.

After the Realmgates were closed a great crusade rid the lands of Azyr of monsters, orruks and skaven. None remained in the heavens save those whom Sigmar deemed worthy. Although his own kingdom was safe, from his high throne Sigmar looked down to see the torment of the other realms, watching them crumble into Chaos. The God of the Heavens called upon his servants and all that remained loyal to him. A great work was to be undertaken.

Many were the gifts given to Sigmar, each aiding his endeavours. One of the greatest of the tributes came from Grungni, the Ancestor God of the duardin. Although Grungni had given Sigmar the servitude of the Six Smiths, he still felt debt-burdened. Perceiving Sigmar's intentions to free the remaining realms of their affliction, Grungni himself went to work. The master of smiths knew Sigmar had need of a weapon, having lost his hammer, Ghal Maraz. Yet it was Sigmar's hope to reclaim that mighty heirloom, so instead, on his anvil, Grungni captured the Winds Celestial. Loud rang the volcano forge, as if a battle were being fought there. At last, his face blackened and beard crackling, Grungni gave unto Sigmar a mighty gift – comet-headed thunderbolts, each brighter than fire.

Now Sigmar could hurl his wrath downwards. He could cast bolts from the Heavens.







THE OPENING OF THE HEAVENS

Across the realms the sudden rolling thunder and scintillating flashes heralded no mere storm, but the start of a new era. Much rode on the sudden shock attacks of the Stormcast Eternals, for Sigmar knew he had only one shot at taking his almighty foes unaware. A single failure could spell disaster...

Despite weathering blows that would level mountaintops, and shrugging off spells that could reduce entire armies to ashes, the Gates of Azyr remained closed. None had passed through those portals for untold centuries, since Sigmar sealed them during the Age of Chaos. It was not for lack of trying, as besieging armies surrounded many of the gates, monsters and hell-forged daemon engines alike pounding relentlessly upon them. Yet still the gates stood firm.

Such trifles as stout barriers did not trouble the Dark Gods. They knew that when all else had fallen across the other realms these gates too would be broken. It was only a matter of time.

When Sigmar at last unleashed his storm of war, he did so with a great suddenness. It was no easy matter surprising a foe that could call upon the precognitive powers of twisted covens, greater daemons and the Silver Towers of Tzeentch. It had taken much effort to

cloud the aether, and to do so Sigmar had called upon the aid of Teclis, Tyrion, and Malerion.

None, not even the ultimate schemer and fate weaver himself, Lord Tzeentch, could be allowed to learn of Sigmar's newly created army, nor of his plans. For Sigmar knew that his ultimate goal – to free the Mortal Realms from the subjugation of Chaos – could only be achieved if his armies struck fast and did not falter.





THE REALMGATE WARS

Though Sigmar was able to hurl his Stormcast Eternals into the Mortal Realms as blazes of meteoric force, he could not do so indefinitely. The full might of the Stormhosts included tens of thousands of warriors, and to send them in piecemeal was to see them overwhelmed. To bring his full might to bear, Sigmar would need to open the Gates of Azyr, ensuring that his legions could strike as one.

The Gates of Azyr represented salvation as well as bloody revenge. Sigmar's Stormcast Eternals were creatures of magic as much as flesh, immortal after a fashion, and possessed of an unquenchable spirit. Upon death they would return to Sigmaron as a flash of

energy, ready to be reforged once more, but in doing so, they would lose part of themselves, slowly leaving behind the heroes they once were. With the Gates of Azyr secured, they could march back to Sigmar's side without loss.

So potent were the wards around the Gates of Azyr that they needed to be opened from both sides simultaneously. Everything was staked on those warriors first cast into battle. Thus the first stage of Sigmar's war was the sudden assaults upon the outer portals of the Gates of Azyr. The shock that such unexpected and furious assaults sent through the Mortal Realms was indescribable, the clamour of battle reverberating all the way to the Realm of Chaos itself.



They brought a furious vengeance with them from out of the heavens.





The coming of Sigmar's unprecedented armies was like the onset of a terrible storm. In an instant the heavens grew angry, and the skies went from clear to incandescent. So unexpected and blindingly fast were those initial strikes – thunderbolts that forked down from clear blue skies – that some of the enemy warriors were slain even as they stood in amazement, awed by the shining knights that stepped out of the storm-strikes.

More often than not, though, the Chaos forces that opposed them rose up quickly to meet this new challenge. They bellowed their battle cries – words feared since the realms were young – and charged headlong at the celestial warriors.

Within moments of their arrival, the brotherhoods of Stormcast Eternals were surrounded by axe-wielding warbands seeking to hack them down. But the massed hordes of the enemy were only the beginning of the threat.



The strikes of the Stormcast brought death, swift and terrible.

Scattered amongst the warbands were individuals whose martial prowess made them equal in power to a small army themselves. Bloody-handed champions, greater daemons and towering behemoths strode the battlefields – great titans of war. They were wreckers of cities, or nation-smashing monsters capable of turning the tide of battle single-handedly. Thus were the Stormcast Eternals well and truly tested before the Gates of Azyr.

At the living portal in Ghyran, the Lord-Celestant of the Knights of the Aurora cut down a ravager-lord and opened the gate. In the Igneous Delta, Vandus Hammerhand, leader of the Hammers of Sigmar, bested Korghos Khul, the fell-handed destroyer of Scorched Keep. The Bloodthirster Khorg'tan, the Living Rage, halted the first two strikes of Stormcast Eternals at the Scintillating Portal, but fell eventually to the relentless blows of the Celestial Vindicators. Many scores of such assaults erupted across the realms.



Every one of them was a hero, their valour proven in battle. They were granters of death, bringers of justice, and in their hands they carried retribution wrought in star-forged sigmarite. Great shields they bore, the devices of their Stormhosts blazoned proud upon them, and the visage of each helm showed a merciless scowl that was echoed by the face of the wearer beneath.



As it became apparent that the Gates of Azyr were the targets of these attacks, more Chaos armies rushed to join the battles. Further reinforcements – in the form of daemon legions – were sent straight from the Realm of Chaos. At portals that had yet to be opened, the battles grew more fierce and desperate, as the Stormcast Eternals struggled to break open the mystic seals.



Where the Gates of Azyr were opened, thunder rolled and lightning split the skies. Entire Stormhosts arrived, advancing to meet the oncoming hordes. There, the clashes escalated into massive wars the like of which had not been seen since the days when Sigmar strode the fields of battle himself. Star-forged hammer met ensorcelled blade to decide the fate of the Mortal Realms.











The disparate and oppressed folk felt something new.

In the Jade Realms of Ghyran, Alarielle felt the lands around her stirring. For the first time in an age, there was a wholesome feel to the breeze. In Aqshy, the tribes felt something rekindled, as if embers long buried had once again sprung to flame. In the savage lands of Ghur, those with the keenest senses were the first to scent it – the winds were shifting. Every living being in Shyish felt a chill, the unmistakable sign that Nagash once more strode the waking world. In the Ulgulands, the shadows parted so that Sigendil, the High Star, could be seen beaming down. In Hysh, the symbolism of new beginnings and the return of reason sprouted everywhere. Even in the hard and unyielding lands of Chamon, where ephemeral whim was despised, the promising feeling solidified. In Azyr, where it all began, the heavens rumbled and lightning flashed as mighty Sigmar sent more hosts down into the Mortal Realms.

Rumours of the gleaming knights that rode upon the thunderbolts swept the lands. Open rebellion against the Dark Gods was beginning. For the first time in generations beyond count, the desperate free folk felt the stirrings of something they had not known before.

Thus was hope reborn into the realms.





BATTLE UNBOUND



THE PAGEANTRY OF WAR

The worlds of *Warhammer: Age of Sigmar* offer infinite possibilities for any avid miniature collector. Its soaring landscapes, vast armies and fantastical battles are fuel and inspiration for your own projects – this book is just the beginning of an exciting journey.

One of the greatest joys of collecting Citadel Miniatures can be found in the modelling and painting of your collection, as you assemble and recreate all of the great heroes, terrifying monsters and amazing landscapes of the Age of Sigmar. Nothing beats seeing a fully painted army arranged

in a carefully crafted setting – an epic fantasy world recreated in miniature, with all the pageantry and spectacle that comes with it – or set up in a display case, there to be admired by all.

There's real satisfaction to be had in making your miniatures your own,

bringing them to life with a paintbrush and teasing out all of the finely sculpted detail of each model. Some people revel in treating each individual miniature as a work of art – lavishing attention on every inch and building scenic bases – while others prefer to assemble vast legions of warriors in matching liveries,



focussing on the spectacle of massed ranks, armed and ready for war.

There's no right or wrong way to go about this – you should go wherever your inspiration takes you, and do whatever you think makes your miniatures look great. Take your time to consider. The paint scheme you select will help you to imbue your models with character and story, and to define who they are. Why has this particular chamber of Stormcast Eternals got pockmarked, battle-scarred armour? Why do they

paint the shafts of their hammers in shining silver? What are they doing in a mysterious landscape of glowing ice sculptures and blue flame?

Games Workshop produces a comprehensive range of paints, brushes, tools and guidebooks to help you, but ultimately, the choice is yours – what exciting story do you want to tell with your miniatures?





Painting Citadel Miniatures is infinitely rewarding, and you will find that the more you put in, the more you get out. Painting allows you to explore your miniatures, unlocking their potential and bringing them to life, and the finished results will be truly unique.

Some factions, the Stormcast Eternals amongst them, use proud heraldry to unite them better on the battlefield. You might want to paint your collection to match those we have created for *Warhammer: Age of Sigmar*; you may be inspired by a photo or piece of artwork, or choose to replicate a particular faction's look. Alternatively, you might wish to create a brand new colour scheme of your own devising – and the icons to go with it. After all, the armies that fight for control of the Mortal Realms are without number.

Before painting your models, you'll first need to assemble them. To begin with, you'll want to follow the advice given in the construction booklet supplied with the models, but as your confidence grows, you may find yourself trying more ambitious methods, leading to ever more personal results.

There are a few pointers that can make the painting process even more enjoyable. Try basecoating all your models at the same time to ensure consistency. Some hobbyists are happy to let this first coat of paint dry and get straight to war, but when you revisit your collection, we recommend painting the models in batches of five. This not only gives more coherent results, but also a genuine sense of achievement once each batch is finished. You don't have to do all the

stages at one time; you can always come back to it, or play a few games in between each session. Consider leaving the most heroic models in your army until last. That way you'll have a real treat waiting for you once the main force is done, and you'll have honed your skills so that the most impressive models in each army are the ones that have the best paint jobs. With a few units under your belt, you'll find yourself wanting to add new units, and perhaps some scenery, to your collection. Most hobbyists find that once they're bitten by the painting bug, it's hard to stop.

We've used the next section to inspire you with some collections of our own. Just remember, there are no rules – the Mortal Realms are a limitless canvas; it's up to you how you fill them.























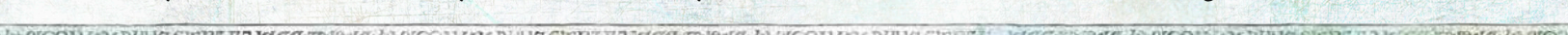
In a blaze of lightning, the Hammers of Sigmar take their crusade to Chamon, the Realm of Metal.



The Celestial Vindicators are as merciless and unstoppable as a raging hurricane.



Grey Seer Skrellit leads a motley assortment of heavily armed Stormfiends and arcane skaven war engines to battle.





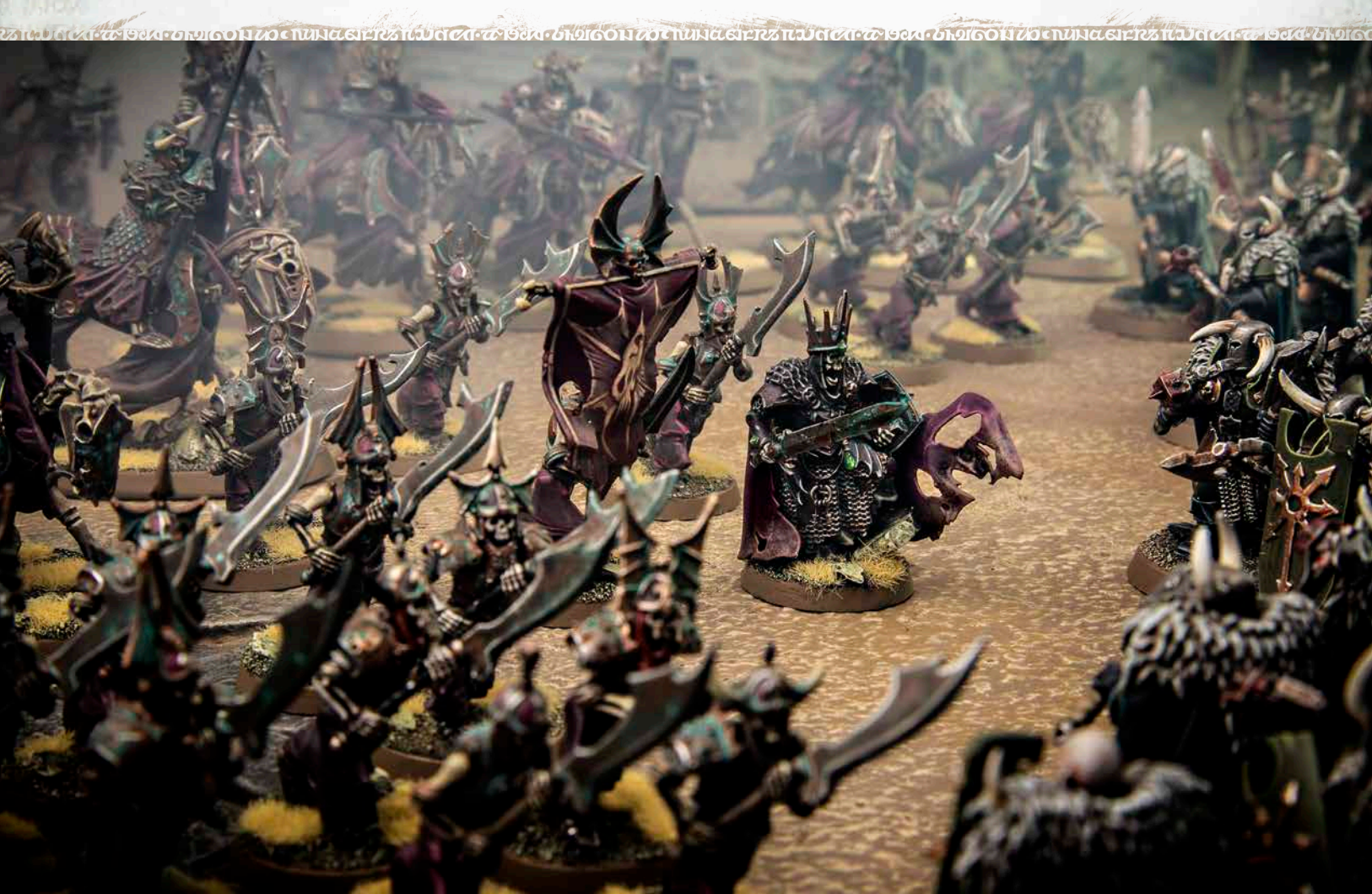
Nighthaunt Wraiths carry with them the chill of the grave.



Shrieking wildly, the Nighthaunt Spirit Hosts attack.



Hordes of Flesh-eaters lope and bound from the mists, each desperate for the taste of hot flesh.







There are few deadlier foes in all the realms than the vampiric servants of dread Nagash.



Soulblight Blood Knights are warrior lords all, their martial prowess famed across the realms.





The ground trembles as the seraphon ride their saurian monstrosities to war.





A clan of Aleguzzler Gargants on the rampage is a terrifying sight.



Few sounds inspire dread like the clicking clatter of a Spiderfang charge.







The Ironblaster cannon favoured by the Beastclaw ogors fires a clutch of cannonballs with each titanic blast.



When a Beastclaw Hunter commands his brutish menagerie to attack, even the champions of Chaos take heed.



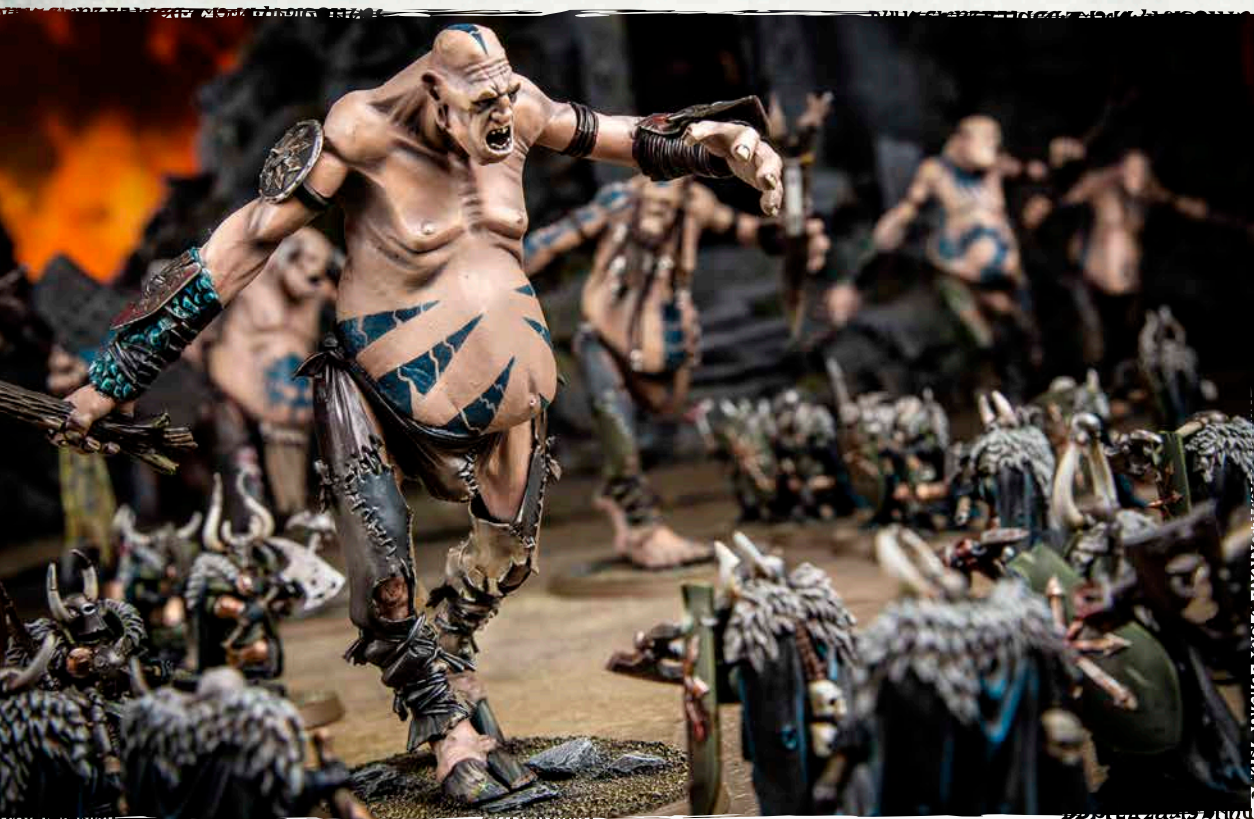




Sylvaneth Dryads, strange fusions of spirit and elder tree, assail those who would harm the forest.



Deep in the Realm of Life, the war between sylvaneth and Rotbringer rages still.



An Alekuzzler Gargant is a law unto himself, seeing mortal folk as insects to be crushed underfoot.



The allegiance of an Alekuzzler tribe, like their sobriety, is short-lived at best.







There are those in Azyrheim whose peoples are long lost, but whose desire for revenge will never die.



Sigmar sparks zealous fire in mortal men, inspiring them to fight alongside the Stormcast Eternals.



Be they daemon, monster or mortal man, all shall kneel to the Dark Gods of Chaos.

