

WARHAMMER
FANTASY ROLEPLAY

REALM OF THE ICE QUEEN



A GUIDE TO KISLEV



 FANTASY ROLEPLAY

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REALM OF THE ICE QUEEN

A GUIDE TO KISLEV

Design and Writing: David Chart, Steven Darlington,
Andy Law and Graham McNeill

Development: Robert J. Schwalb **Editing:** Kara Hamilton

Graphic Design & Art Direction: Hal Mangold

Cover Art: Stef Kopinski and Andrew Law **WFRP Logo:** Darius Hinks

Interior Art: Alex Boyd, Carl Frank, Martin Hanford, Pat Loboyko,
Eric Lofgren, Chuck Lukacs, Scott Purdy, Pascal Quidault,
Adrian Smith

Cartography: Andrew Law

WFRP Brand Manager: Kate Flack

WFRP Development Manager: Owen Barnes

Head of Black Industries: Marc Gascoigne

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INTRODUCTION

Danger, excitement, and hardship await those who dare travel the cold, inhospitable lands of Kislev; yet, there is no shortage of heroes who brave these perils in search of fortune and glory. As the most northerly of the civilised nations of the Old World, Kislev stands forever on the brink of annihilation, for it borders the dreaded Chaos Wastes—the realm of the Dark Gods and home to the bloodthirsty tribes that worship them.

It is a wide, unbroken steppe with a bitter climate and hardy people. Bounded by the Sea of Claws to the west, the Troll Country to the north, and the Worlds Edge Mountains to the east, its inhabitants must fight to survive against raiders from Norsca, Orc and Goblin tribes from the mountains, and roving bands of nomadic raiders that plague the steppe. It is the Empire's bulwark against invasion from the north, and both nations have fought side by side many times over the centuries to defend their lands from the vile followers of Chaos, most recently against the diabolical hordes of Archaon the Everchosen.

Life in such a harsh land breeds hard men and women, people for whom the constant threat of death and destruction has become a way of life. To most outsiders, the inhabitants of

Kislev are a dour, taciturn race, which is not surprising given the climate and their precarious way of life. But they possess a grim, often morbid, sense of humour and have a strict code of hospitality that welcomes strangers as well as friends to their hearth.

The northern reaches of Kislev are wild and untamed, a bleak land of roving tribes and raiders, and the few settlements that survive do so thanks to high palisade walls of logs and the brave warriors who defend them. At night, doors are locked, and windows are shuttered, as the ghosts of forgotten wars howl on the wind, and the chill of the grave settles upon the landscape.

In the south, Kislev becomes more hospitable—though it is still cold for the better part of the year—and farmsteads and isolated communities flourish here. To many in the Empire, Kislev is seen as a somewhat backward place, and the rustic appearance of its buildings and lifestyle tend to support this. Such is not true, however, of the mighty cities where great temples and palaces are the envy of many such civilised lands. The capital city, also called Kislev, is home to some of the most incredible feats of architecture and culture, and Erengard is one of the largest, most cosmopolitan cities in the Old World.

— ADVENTURES IN KISLEV —

Such a land of contradictions draws many adventurers northwards, for the promise of glory and undiscovered riches is a powerful allure to those of restless spirit. A thriving trade in mercenaries flourishes in Kislev, since the many miles foreign merchants and emissaries must cross to reach their destinations are fraught with danger. Those seeking treasure are lured by the thought of plundering undiscovered tombs of long-dead warlords and perhaps even uncovering the location of the legendary burial places of the ancient Khan-Queens.

For some, darker reasons take them northwards, for the Winds of Magic blow strongly from the north, and the land is rich with magic. In such a violent realm, those who seek battle will find ample tests of their martial prowess, and such a desolate landscape is the perfect place in which to disappear for those who seek to escape their past misdeeds.

It is a land of dark mystery, unfettered by the stern rule of law that attempts to hold sway in the southern lands, and all manner of adventures await those with the courage to seek them. Vicious bandits and slave raiders roam the land, and adventurers may seek those taken in such raids. Others may be guarding the lives of merchant princes or carrying a vital message between Kislev's cities. Many who have escaped the hangman's noose flee to Kislev, and there is no shortage of bounty hunters who venture north in search of such quarry. Those seeking lost treasures often climb the soaring crags of the Worlds Edge Mountains in search of gold said to be hidden in lost Dwarf holds. Adventurers who hear the call of the

wanderer often pass through Kislev before journeying onwards into the mysterious east, hoping to cross the treacherous peaks and Greenskin-infested passes that lead to the savage lands of the Ogres and perhaps even far off Cathay.

Adventurers with a wish to confront their darkest fears can travel northwards and cross the River Lynsk, going beyond Kislev into the Troll Country, where monstrous beasts and creatures warped by the mutating power of Chaos dwell. Such ventures almost always end in death, for the creatures that stalk this unforgiving land are deadly and utterly ferocious. But bold adventurers may survive long enough to discover one of the many tombs of a fallen champion of the tribes and earn a fortune in gold and perhaps even discover an enchanted weapon or armour. Such prizes make the dangers of journeying to the Troll Country worthwhile to those in search of treasure.

Only the most foolhardy adventurers (or those with a splinter of darkness in their hearts) dare enter the Chaos Wastes beyond the Troll Country, for it is a realm of madness and corruption. The laws of reality have no meaning there, and the land shifts and warps to the whims and desires of screeching Daemons. This realm is the Dark Gods', and any who return from his hellish region are changed forever.

To seek adventure in Kislev is not for the faint hearted, for its dangers are many, and there are no easy pickings in the wild steppes. However, great rewards await those bold and brave enough to seek them out.

...FOR THIS IS KISLEV!

Now swirled in blinding eddies of freezing white around the four horsemen as they rode towards the dark shape of the *stanitsa*, the log walls of the village a welcome sight after travelling for days across the bleak steppe. Dieter shivered in the depths of his furs, grateful beyond words to see some sign of civilisation, though he knew that such a word was relative in this wild, savage country. His horse stumbled in the thick snow, and he heard Torbek curse as his beast did likewise. The Dwarf had not liked the idea of riding, but there had been little choice. To stand any chance of catching the slavers, they had to ride.

"I swear this beast is deliberately trying to unseat me!" he grumbled.

No one replied, not even the belligerent swordsman, Markus, who usually never passed up an opportunity to make fun of the dour warrior of Karaz-a-Karak. The sunlight was dying, and their Dolgan guide had pushed them hard over the last week, to the point where even conversation required effort.

They had travelled through endless miles of cold steppe that stretched off into the distance in a vast, unbroken swathe of desolate emptiness and long days, enduring a land where the sky seemed somehow wider than he could ever remember it being back in Ludendorff. The dark forests of the Empire narrowed your view of the world, but here, the land spread out in great open spaces that made a man feel utterly insignificant. He'd heard men had gone mad in the wilderness of Kislev, and having spent the better part of the last few weeks travelling beneath the empty skies of this rugged land, he could well believe it.

Zakir, their guide, shouted towards the *stanitsa* in the song-like tongue of his people, the howling wind snatching away much of the sense of it as far as Dieter could make out.

"Fat chance of them letting us in," snorted Torbek. "Why should they?"

"Come on," said Markus. "What harm could we do them? We're only four riders."

"Aye," agreed Dieter. "We know that, but they don't. For all they know, there could be a hundred *kyazak* concealed in the blizzard just waiting for us to block the gate from closing once it's open."

"Bloody Kislevites," said Markus. "Don't they ever relax?"

"Would you, if you lived so close to Troll Country?" asked Dieter.

"Stop being so damned logical," snapped Markus. "So you're saying it's another night on the steppe for us? Great."

Dieter opened his mouth to reply but held his tongue as he heard an answering cry from the wall ahead. He held up his hand as he tried to follow the shouted conversation between Zakir and the men on the walls, but the little Kislevarin he had picked up was insufficient for him to make much sense of what was being said.

Closer now, he could see the village had been built on the skirts of a low mound of earth, with a sturdy *zal* raised within a rocky stockade and a number of white-painted buildings clustered within the outer palisade wall of sharpened logs. Dieter could see warriors with long spears and bows over the top of the logs, thick furs protecting them from the worst of the cold. The hairs on the back of his neck stiffened as he realised there were probably a dozen arrows aimed squarely at his heart right now.

Zakir circled his mount, a roan-coloured steppe pony with a wide chest and mean temperament, before the thick timbers of the *stanitsa's* gate, shouting and laughing with gate guards.

"What in Sigmar's name is he doing?" said Markus.

"He's laughing," said Dieter, similarly puzzled.

"That's it then," said Torbek. "The steppe's got to him, and the bugger's gone mad. We're all going to die out here, and that's no way for a son of Grungni to die, frozen to death in this wasteland. There's not even a decent mountain in sight."

"I don't think we're going to die here," said Dieter as he heard the creak of timbers and the sound of a heavy locking bar being removed from the gate. The gate slowly opened outwards, pushing mounds of snow ahead of it, and Zakir beckoned them forward. Dieter dug his heels into his mount's flanks and rode towards the opening, Torbek and Markus quickly following him.

"What did you say to them?" asked Dieter as he reached Zakir. "How did you persuade them to open the gate?"

The shaven headed Dolgan shrugged and said, "Persuade? What mean?"

"Why are they letting us in?"

"Zakir just ask to spend night," said the Dolgan, as if explaining something to a simpleton. "Is rude to refuse hospitality of house to stranger. And hetman of Dzharov not be dishonoured by leaving us out here to die. Is very cold."

"Too cold to be out here wasting time talking," agreed Markus as he rode for the gate.

"The lad's right," said Torbek, forcing his mount to follow the swordsman. "We could all do with a warm bed for a change."

"Dwarf speak true," said Zakir. "Go. Pay respects to hetman then eat and drink by fire!"

Dieter couldn't argue with that and guided his horse through the gates and into the *stanitsa*. Inside, the huts and barns of the village were swathed in thick shawls of snow, the earth within the palisade walls iron hard and criss-crossed with tracks. Looking up to the inside face of the walls, Dieter could see a dozen or so men patrolling a timber rampart, watchful for any signs of *kyazak* or worse. Living this far north in Kislev, Human raiders could be the least of the *stanitsa's* worries.

After seeing to their horses, Zakir and a warrior named Aydin led the group up the slopes of the mound towards the thick-walled *zal*, its narrow windows shuttered and its heavy, iron-banded door shut tight against the elements. A curl of fragrant smoke rose from the roof, and Dieter saw the building reflected the Kislevites as a people: practical, dour, and uninviting.

Aydin hammered the haft of his spear against the door. Seconds later, it was hauled open, and they hurriedly made their way inside. Heat assailed Dieter, and he blinked in the sudden light. Two fires burned in wide hearths, filling the hall with a warm orange glow, and the mouth-watering aroma of cooking meat came from slowly turning spits. Groups of Kislevites sitting on colourful blankets sang rowdy songs, and men in long shirts danced and capered around the fires to rhythmic clapping, while wild music was played on stringed harp and violin-like instruments.

The riot of colour was in stark contrast to the bleak whiteness they had just ridden through, and Dieter was rendered speechless by the vividness of the sight before him.

Long-haired women in scarlet shawls handed plates of meat and vegetables around, and skins of drink were passed between laughing men. At the far end of the long hall, a powerful man with a shock of dark hair and a long drooping moustache sat on an elaborately carved chair atop a wooden dais. He clapped in time with the music, a tall axe propped up next to him.

"What's going on?" said Markus. "Are they having a party?"

"Party?" said Zakir. "No, this is Dzhafarov stanitsa, and this night is good time to eat and drink. Here, drink some koumiss."

"Fair enough," said Dieter, accepting the proffered leather wineskin and taking a mouthful of the spirit. Having drunk koumiss before, he knew to only take small sips, for the liquor was far stronger than anything produced in the Empire. The fiery spirit burned on the way down, but he was grateful for its warmth.

"Come," said Zakir, gripping his arm and leading him towards the man at the end of the long hall. "Must pay respects to hetman."

Dieter was unable to reconcile the energy and laughter he saw around him with the grim, unforgiving people of Kislev he had met previously, his heart warming to these northern folk as he saw the hetman rise from his chair to greet them.

The man was tall and powerfully built—the thick furs and colourful clothing unable to conceal his mighty physique and martial bearing. Dieter nodded respectfully to the hetman, as did Torbek and Markus.

"Me Osman Marmedov," said the hetman in a booming voice of thickly accented Reikspiel. "You welcome in Dzhafarov. My home is your home."

"We are grateful indeed," said Dieter. "You honour us with your hospitality. We will, of course, compensate you for the food and shelter."

"Compensate? I not understand."

Zakir waved his hand and said something in hurried Kislevarin to Marmedov before turning and hissing at Dieter. "Not offer money! Is insult to his hospitality."

"Sorry," said Dieter. "I didn't know."

"I tell him you will tell tales of your lands," said Zakir. "That is price of shelter."

"Ah, well that we can do," said Torbek proudly. "I have thousands of years of tales for him."

Marmedov stepped close to Dieter, and he could smell the koumiss and meat on the man's breath. "Eat. Drink. Tell me why you travel through *Rasputitsa*."

Dieter knew the word meant "roadlessness," the deadly featurelessness that the snows brought to Kislev and rendered direction and maps irrelevant. To travel at such times was tantamount to suicide, but they had a job to do, and the snows had come upon them suddenly.

"We are tracking a band of kyazak slavers who attacked the Natavan stanitsa," said Dieter. "The hetman's daughter was among those taken."

Marmedov's face darkened and he nodded in understanding, spitting into the fire as he said, "Kyazak no good filth. Prey upon people of the land and give nothing back. Hetman of Natavan sends you to find his daughter? Why? He has no sons, no warriors?"

"His sons are dead," said Torbek, "killed in battle, and his warriors are few."

The hetman shrugged. "Is good way to die. When you find kyazak, you kill them. Dzhafarov stanitsa will give you food and warriors for hunt."

"Thank you," said Dieter, bowing to Marmedov.

"Is of no matter," said Marmedov. "Rest and eat. Tomorrow you hunt kyazak."

As the hetman spoke, a sudden darkness fell upon the hall, and all heat fled from its walls as the fires guttered in their hearths. Dieter gripped his sword hilt as Marmedov swept up the axe from beside his chair.

All song ceased, and the music ended as warriors snatched up spears and swords from beneath their blankets and leapt to their feet. Dieter felt a crawling sensation of dread work its way up his spine in the sudden silence, hearing a distant howl on the winds rattling the shutters.

"What's happening?" shouted Markus, his sword already drawn.

"Be silent!" roared Marmedov, looking up at the smoke hole in the hall's roof. "The *Ryzhnyi Khoziain* rides the wind. If we are lucky, it pass on its way."

Dieter followed the hetman's gaze, watching the darkness beyond the hole for any sign of movement, wishing he knew what he was looking for. The only sound in the hall was the crackle of the embers and the mournful howl of the wind beyond the walls. Dieter held his breath and glanced over at Markus and Torbek. The Dwarf had his axe at the ready, and Markus was tensed for a fight. They, too, could sense the creeping fear that slid into the hall like an assassin's blade.

Marmedov held up his hand, and Dieter could hear the faint sound of booming wings, as though something immense flew nearby. Even as he heard the sound, it faded and the unreasoning fear he had felt began to fade.

For the space of ten heartbeats, nothing moved.

Then the darkness lifted, and the fires roared back into full-throated life. Marmedov put down his axe and shouted something in Kislevarin. The musicians began to play, and the people of the hall once again took up the songs.

"What in the name of Sigmar's blood was that?" breathed Markus.

Marmedov placed a meaty fist on the swordsman's shoulder and said, "Not speak of it. Bad luck."

"But—"

"Nya!" insisted Marmedov sternly. "Is our way. Respect it."

"Aye, lad," said Torbek. "Do as the man says."

"Aren't you worried that thing might come back?" said Dieter.

Marmedov shrugged and took a mighty swig from a wineskin. "Is of no matter. Tomorrow we may be dead, so tonight we drink and eat and sing. For this is Kislev!"

THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLES

"The strength of Kislev lies in you all. The land has called you all here, and it is here that you will put that strength to the test defying Chaos. There is power in this land, and tomorrow it will run in all your veins. Use it well."

—THE ICE QUEEN OF KISLEV



The inhospitable land of Kislev lies to the northeast of the Empire and acts as a bulwark between the land of Sigmar and the Realm of Chaos. Kislev is a wide-open steppe, containing waving, tall grasses and thundering, icy rivers. Lonely villages stand isolated in the empty wilderness, and mighty cities rise from the landscape like great islands of stone. The climate is harsh and unforgiving, and only the strongest, most determined people can survive here. The Kislevite people are wolf-tough and self-reliant, often seen as backward and rustic by their more "civilised" neighbours, but none can doubt their bravery or determination, for Kislev is a land that stands forever on the brink of destruction. The people of Kislev have seen their country ripped asunder by foul hordes from the Chaos Wastes of the far north time and time again, and now these stoic folk face a colder and harder life than they ever have before.

PRINCIPAL GEOGRAPHY

To the south and west, Kislev is bordered by the sprawling dark forests of the Empire, the land to which it has sworn the Eternal Alliance following the Great War against Chaos. For centuries, the warriors of Kislev and the soldiers of the Empire have fought the forces of the Dark Gods, and though relations have not always been harmonious, neither nation has failed to answer the call to battle when its ally is in peril. The Sea of Claws forms Kislev's western coastline, and the settlements that survive here by fishing and whaling must constantly battle against the terror of Norse raiders, who sail from their frozen harbours to plague the southern lands. Kislev has no standing navy, and these villages must look to their own defence when they spy Norse longships on the horizon in search of slaves and plunder.

The bleak land far beyond the River Lynsk to the north is known as the Troll Country, a hostile land of war-hungry tribes and monstrously mutated beasts of Chaos. The Worlds Edge Mountains form a virtually impenetrable barrier to the northeast and east, and within these dark peaks dwell numerous tribes of Orcs and Goblins.

Within these boundaries can be found all manner of terrain: forests, rivers, and hills, though within its borders there is little in the way of mountains, and only the occasional low mound of earth breaks up the sprawling grassland steppe. The southern border shared with the Empire has long been established at the River Urskoy (named after the god Ursun), which surges from the soaring peaks of the Worlds Edge Mountains and flows westwards until its frozen waters swell the waters of the Talabec.

Kislev's northern border is more difficult to define, though most scholars agree that it's convenient to draw it at the River Lynsk, a river of deadly cold that flows all the way to the Sea of Claws. The reason for this difficulty is because the north of Kislev is barely distinguishable from the Troll Country and the tundra beyond. Only a few of Kislev's tribes travel further north than the Lynsk, riding into the Troll Country and eastwards along the High Pass. The north of Kislev is a cold, infertile land, and most of the Kislevites who can be found here live a nomadic existence, moving constantly from one grazing ground to the next, much like the Marauder tribes of the Shadowlands.

As the inhospitable north gives way to the south and approaches the marches of the Empire, Kislev transforms, assuming many of the civilised trappings found in the lands of Sigmar's people. Remote farmsteads flourish in these lands, and most of these settlements tend to be fashioned from uncut



rocks or local timber since quarried stone is in short supply. This appearance gives many of Kislev's settlements a somewhat backward, frontier look that people of the Empire consider uncivilised.

THE MOUNTAINS

Kislev is bounded to the east by the Worlds Edge Mountains, grimly forbidding peaks that rise from the steppe like rearing fangs and seem to scrape the sky with their immensity. In ancient times, the entirety of the mountains was once the domain of the Dwarfs, who crafted vast cities and fortresses in the rock. When the Dwarf realm fell into ruin, many of these tunnels and halls were destroyed, forgotten, or captured by Night Goblins and Skaven. The only holds said to remain this far north are Karak Ungor (now known as Red Eye Mountain after its capture by the Red Eye tribe of Night Goblins) and the lost stronghold of Karak Vlag. Only the insanely brave or foolhardy would dare risk the untold dangers of the mountains, but the lure of mighty treasure hordes lying forgotten in abandoned Dwarf holds is a powerful incentive. The main route over the Worlds Edge Mountains in Kislev is the High Pass, a treacherous route that leads from Kislev to the mysterious lands of the east, where dark tales speak of a realm of flesh-eating Ogres and a race of Dwarfs corrupted by the power of Chaos.

FORESTLAND

The great forests of the Empire gradually thin out at their northern border, giving way to the increasingly desolate *oblast* (a broad, empty, frozen region, for more information,

see **Chapter VI: The Oblast** on page 51) of Kislev. Despite this, Kislev is not without small woods and forests, some of which are rumoured to be the homes of isolated Wood Elf communities. Such rumours are perhaps not without substance, as there are many folk tales that speak of shadowy bands of archers who have emerged from the forests to save Kislevite warriors from certain death at the hands of Beastmen. However, no sooner are the creatures of Chaos destroyed than these saviours vanish back into the woods without a word.

The majority of Kislev's (admittedly small) forestland is to be found in the more fertile south or in the more forested regions to the east, in the foothills of the Worlds Edge Mountains, though isolated copses and small wooded areas can be found throughout Kislev. These forests are home to all manner of vile creatures—Beastmen, Orcs, Goblins, or other dangerous beasts—that have come down from the mountains in search of prey.

Since Kislev lacks for extensive forests, there's little to break the near constant wind that whips down from the north or northeast. These biting cold gusts scour the steppe, blowing across the lands with such violence that those who endure are hardened, toughened, and made strong. In fact, it is this phenomenon that gives rise to the expression of "living in the wind," meaning to live a hardy, tough existence. These fierce northern winds are seen as signs of ill-omen and are said to herald the coming of the warlike tribesmen of the Dark Gods. When such winds blow strong, it is a time of fear and uncertainty, and the warriors of Kislev ready for war.

THE STEPPE

"It ain't natural to live out there without a good roof of stone above yeh. I kept in my wagon with a big hat on, so's I didn't go mad like them. Nary a decent mountain to be had within eyeshot and nowt but open skies and empty land all around you. I tell you it ain't natural."

—DIMZAD URGRIMSON,
DWARF MERCHANT OF KARAZ-A-KARAK.

The majority of Kislev is made up of the massive, sprawling grasslands known as the steppe, a vast landscape where a traveller is never warm, and the air is parched and dry. Very little rain falls on the steppe, meaning only the hardiest grasses and plants can survive, but when the rains do come, they are torrential downpours that break the banks of rivers and stop all but the most determined from travelling. Aside from small villages, known as *stanitsas*, virtually the only inhabitants of the steppe are nomadic tribesmen who roam the steppe in groups, constantly searching for new grazing areas. The soil in the north of the steppe is very poor, and only in the more fertile south of the country can farmers coax crops from the land. Kyazak dwell in the steppe, but these ferocious warrior-tribesmen do not grow any crops or rear any animals; instead, they take what they need by force, attacking *stanitsas* and slaughtering any travellers they come across for gold and supplies. Such is the vastness of the steppe that it is next to impossible to hunt these raiders down, though there is plentiful work to be found for those who seek employment in defending villages from the kyazaks' brutal raids.

THE TROLL COUNTRY

To the north of the country is the desolate, icy tundra of the Troll Country, a land twisted into unnatural forms due to its proximity to the Chaos Wastes. None dare claim this land, for it is infested with ferocious Beastmen, Trolls, and many other creatures so warped as to defy any classification of form. The Troll Country is also home to warbands of Chaos, who fight their battles for supremacy here before marching south to raid Kislev and the Empire. Besides the followers of Chaos, the only inhabitants in this desolate region are debased, semi-nomadic tribes said to be the descendents of those who were driven northwards by the migrating Gospodars who first settled Kislev.

THE CHAOS WASTES

"I would stand by while Humans were wiped from the face of the world. They bring nothing into the world, and it is certain that they will take nothing out of it. Why should I mourn them?"

—LORD ALDAELD OF ATHEL LOREN

"The Realm of Man must not fall. Our fate is intertwined with theirs, and if they fall, so too do we. For this reason, I taught their first masters of magic, and for this reason, we must not abandon Men, despite their barbarous ways."

—TECLIS, LOREMASTER OF ULTHUAN

Beyond the Troll Country can be found the nightmarish region of the Chaos Wastes, a hellish wasteland of wild magic, where Daemons gibber on the wind, and the laws of reality are undone. This is the realm of the Dark Gods, and no honest or virtuous man dares walk here, for to do so is to abandon all hope of survival and sanity. Here, Gods walk the earth, and the power of magic blows in mighty winds across the landscape. The ground seethes with the saturation of Chaos, the forests writhe with unnatural life, and the sky bleeds in horror at such violation. The very air is poisonous, and only the most insane would ever dream of approaching this warped land.

Here, in the depths of the Chaos Wastes, the myriad followers of the Ruinous Powers blood their champions and make war on each other before unleashing their warbands and armies on the lands of the south. When the Winds of Magic blow strongly, the power of the Gods increases, and their warriors surge southwards to pillage and destroy. Chaos follows in their wake, and the conquered lands writhe and buckle under its foul, warping touch until such times as its power wanes, causing the Realm of Chaos to recede once more, though the lands touched will never be the same.

CLIMATE

"When I travelled into that cold land, I expected the Kislevites to be dour and miserable, Lady knows I arrive after a month of snow, but everywhere I travelled I encountered life and humour. Dark humour, it has to be said, but what else could flourish in a country so wracked with woe as Kislev?"

—FLORIAN BARTHOLD, BRETONNIAN GUILDER

Kislev's climate varies enormously, ranging from long, dark winters to warm, balmy summers when the long grasses can catch fire. During particularly hot summers (a rarity in Kislev), this threat is particularly dangerous, for such steppe fires can spread with unimaginable rapidity since the grass is so dry, and many unwary travellers have been trapped and burned to death by such a conflagration. Such fires are rare, and for the most part, Kislev is a cold, bleak land with little sunlight to warm the body.

Kislev's deadly cold winters are infamous throughout the Old World, and when the snows come, the land is held tight in its iron grip. Temperatures plummet to far below freezing, and to be caught out on the steppe in winter is to die. Snow blankets the land in white, and such is the unending vista of featureless whiteness that covers the land that the Kislevites have a term for such emptiness. It is known as *Raspotitsa*, which means "roadlessness," and no one that values their life dares to travel in such times. Even outside the months of winter, the northern reaches of the steppe are often covered in snow, and the temperature never reaches far above freezing.

When spring finally comes to Kislev, it brings with it a mixture of snow and rain, and with the break of the winter, the steppe comes alive with people as tribes migrate to find fresh grazing, kyazak seek out new prey, and caravans of merchants set off with fresh cargoes to take to far-off markets. Travel in spring is dangerous, as the icy landscape becomes muddy, and wagons often become trapped in the mud, where they will no doubt be

A KISLEV LEXICON

Throughout this sourcebook, you will find numerous Kislevan words. To assist you in navigating the text, these words are defined here for easy reference.

ataman: The village chief
atamanka: Female village chief
bachór: An unruly boy or child; also used to denote a warrior too stupid or unskilled to survive
blyad: A woman of low morals
boyar/boyarin: A noble lord/lords
burmistrz: Mayor
chapka: Fur-lined cap
dewastacja: Devastation; mainly used as a solemn word to describe the land left behind after a Chaos incursion
do widzenia: Good bye, or die well; often used interchangeably
droyaska: Blademaster; a title bestowed upon a master swordsman whose skill is above all others
druzhina: A noble
dzień dobry: Good day
esaul: An ataman's steward
kibitkas: Portable huts
kika: Elaborate headdresses worn by married women
koniushy: The Ice Queen's own Master of the Horse
korzna: A rectangular or semicircular cut cloak of the nobility
koszmar: A nightmare, a time when dark spirits are loose

koumiss: A strong alcoholic beverage made from fermented mare's milk
kozukhi: A sheepskin coat
krashenin: Dyed linen intended for nobility
krowa: A cow or a particularly stupid person
krug: Literally "circles"; used to describe groups of Ungol horsemen
kvas: A clear, distilled spirit popular throughout Kislev, renowned for its potency and medicinal properties
kyazak: Outlaws or raiders
lapti: blunt-pointed, hand-woven shoes
mazurka: A dance from the old days of gallantry, full of suggestions of passion and love
nekulturny: An uncultured person who does not comport himself properly and behaves without respect
oblast: A broad, empty, frozen region
prospekt: A street
pulk: Army
raspashnoe: An open-front over-garment
Rasputitsa: A time when snow blankets the steppe; literally "roadlessness"
riddle-man: Another name for "city guide"

rota: A unit of troops—horse archers, kossars, or winged lancers
rubakha: An ankle-length, loose shift that can be worn as a man's shirt or a woman's underdress
samogon: A crude moonshine
stanitsa: A sizeable Kislev settlement, large enough to raise one or more rotas of horse archers, kossars, or winged lancers every year
svolich: An insult used to question a person's parentage or inferior lineage
świnia: Pig or disgusting person who does not respect tradition
szlachta: From the Reikspiel word, *adels-geschlecht*, meaning nobility
tirsa: A small village
Urtza: Four-year cycle of the Ungol Calendar
venet: Elaborate headdress worn by maidens
yurta: An easily transportable tent constructed from wooden poles and animal skins
zal: The main meeting hall in a village
zza: From beyond; mainly used to describe where Chaos marauders come from, so as to avoid giving voice to the name of their realm

abandoned to enable the caravan to move on before it becomes prey for kyazak.

Autumn is when the people of Kislev hunker down to weather the harsh winter to come. Old men wearily shake their heads and declare that this coming winter will be hard; it is something of a tradition for the elderly of Kislev (of which there are few) to complain that each coming winter will be the hardest yet and then proclaim how the winters were harder when they were younger. In the autumn, firewood is stocked, livestock slaughtered, and crops stockpiled so there will be enough food to last until spring.

THE CITIES

"I'd sooner wrestle an Ogre than risk sailing to Erengard without a dozen armed merchantmen with me. Our navy say they patrol it, and I hear tell that even the Elves sail the Sea of Claws, but I'd just as soon put my trust in my own cannon as leave it to the likes of Elves to keep me safe from Norse raiders!"

—PIET LEERDAM, MERCHANT OF MARIENBURG.

There are three major cities in Kislev: Praag, Erengard, and the capital, which is also called Kislev. Each city has its own distinct history and personality, and though they are all peopled by Kislevites, they each have a personality of their own.

KISLEV

The capital of the nation and seat of the Tzars and Tzarinas who rule the land, Kislev is the largest and most developed of Kislev's cities. Situated close to the Urskoy, it is virtually on the border with the Empire, and many of their customs and aesthetic values have influenced Kislev life, literature, and architecture. Founded as the capital by the Khans and Khan-Queens of the Gospodar people in Year 1 (1524 IC), it has been besieged many times in its history, though it has never fallen to an enemy. At the centre of Kislev lie the Bokha Palaces, the hereditary seat of power, rebuilt during the reign of Tzar Boris Bokha after the original Palace Gospodar in was all but destroyed during the Great War against Chaos in 778 (2302 IC).

OUTSIDER PERSPECTIVE

"Bah, all that kvas makes them mad! Who would want to live there anyway? The summers are cold, the winters are freezing, and if the nomads don't kill you, the marauders will! I tell you, they're welcome to the place!"

—SEBASTIAN WURTZ, MERCHANT OF NULN

"They have courage, I'll give them that, but it's a wild courage, untempered by discipline that's beaten into a man by drill sergeants like me. Give me a month, and I'll have them marching like respectable Empire soldiers."

—DRILL SERGEANT KLAUS WOERKE

"I'd sooner entrust my flank to a Free Company."

—KURT BREMEN, KNIGHT PANTHER

"Neither the climate, manners, nor diversions of the place suit either my health or temper, and the only pleasures I may indulge in are eating and drinking—yet Sigmar knows I have scarce tasted worse in my time here as an ambassador of our noble Emperor than anywhere else."

—LETTER TO ALTDORF, ANDREAS TEUGENHEIM, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO THE COURT OF THE TZARINA KATARIN

"Dey fight good, dem Kislevites. I fight wit' 'em last year when the Gryphon Legion ride south to the Wasteland looking for pay fighting, hey? Dey fight in the saddle, and dey look like dey born there. In fact, I don't think I never seen one get off his horse. Maybe dey love 'em a little too much, if a ya know what I mean?"

—ENZO MARCOCLIO, TILEAN MERCENARY

ERENGRADE

Originally the Ungol capital (when it was merely a walled town known as Norvard), it was later overrun by the Gospodars. Now, Erengard is Kislev's main trading city and its largest port. Situated on the coast of the Sea of Claws, vessels from across the Old World, New World, and even Norsca come here with goods, slaves, gems, and precious metals. Kislev does not have a standing navy and, instead, relies on Empire warships and private merchant vessels to safeguard their waters. Erengard also benefits from extensive defences in the form of cannons, walls, and submerged mines to repel would-be invaders. Still, the waters of the Sea of Claws are dangerous, and all merchant ships are armed in some fashion, many to the standards of other nations' warships, and can be pressed into service by the Tzarina when needed.

PRAAG

Also known as the Cursed City, Praag is the most northerly of Kislev's largest settlements and has been overrun several times by the northern tribes. During the Great War against Chaos, the walls and buildings became so corrupted with Chaos energy they sprouted tentacles and eyes. Wailing screams echoed from rooftops, and the ground beneath the city shifted and writhed. After their victory at the siege of Kislev, the Kislevites razed Praag to the ground and rebuilt it, though it is still rumoured that a dark taint remains there. The people of Praag are regarded as shifty and nervous by most outsiders, paranoid and potentially in league with the dark powers of the north. Praag also acts as a rallying point for the scattered horse tribes in times of war and has a considerable Ungol population. This situation has led to Praag attempting to cede from the

power of the Tzars on three occasions: twice, the city was starved into submission by trade embargoes from the south, and on the third occasion, the city was reclaimed by military force and is now ruled by a Gospodar governor responsible only to the Tzarina.

KISLEV RELATIONS

"Bastard Empire. Kept safe with Kislev blood. You and your land be dead but for us. Kislev's sons die to keep your lands safe, and only when Empire burns do you come to fight. Treat us like dogs and then expect us to die for you!"

—BOYAR ALEXEI KOVOVICH

Though they might like the world to think otherwise, the Kislevites do not stand alone against the perils of Chaos. The country must endure the constant raids and attacks of the northern raiders, but in times of need when the followers of Chaos have gathered in great numbers, the Kislevites have received aid from other nations. Most commonly, forces from the Empire—in particular Ostland, the Ostermark, and Talabecland—march north to assist against these larger incursions.

As has been mentioned earlier, the people of the Empire tend to look down on the Kislevites as backwards and primitive, though it is certainly not the case. Most Empire folk can't understand why anyone would want to live in such a cold, empty land that is constantly threatened by the forces of Chaos. Surely, they say, the people of Kislev would be better off moving somewhere less dangerous? Of course, this view is one that sensible people don't voice, as Kislev provides a handy buffer between the Empire and the hordes of Chaos. Were the

Kislevites to act upon this advice, their nation would become part of the Realm of Chaos, and the northern marauders would be on the Empire's doorstep!

Fortunately for the Empire, the Kislevites would sooner cut their own throats than leave their beloved homeland, for Kislev is their home, and to abandon it would be unthinkable. And there is a streak of stubbornness that many suspect motivates the Kislevites to stay, for to leave would be to admit defeat, and such a thing is unacceptable to a warrior nation. However, there are those in the Empire who suspect the truth is that the Kislevites enjoy being able to bemoan their fate and cast themselves as a put-upon nation, but without their courage, the world would fall to the Dark Gods of Chaos.

During the Great War against Chaos, when the hordes of the north stretched like a sea across the Taiga, it was not just the Humans of the Empire who aided the Kislevites. The Elves and Dwarfs helped as well. High Elf Mage Teclis travelled from Ulthuan to aid Magnus the Pious as he led his armies northward to fight the Chaos tribes in Kislev. A contingent of Dwarfs from Karaz-a-Karak fought alongside the Kislevites in defending the walls of the capital city of Kislev.

In return, it has been known for Kislevites to aid the Dwarfs in clearing the mountain passes, particularly the High Pass, of foes such as Skaven, Greenskins, and marauders. Both respect the stubbornness they see in each other, though Kislevites cannot understand how Dwarfs can spend so much time underground, while a Dwarf generally thinks that all that open sky drives the Kislevites a little insane.

The Wood Elves are famous for their xenophobia, for they distrust all outsiders, even their kin from Ulthuan. However, there are instances where even these reclusive peoples can set aside their isolationist predilections to come to the aid of others. When ancient foes rear their heads, they have been known to make common cause with others. There are very few incidents of this in Kislev's history, but they are there—battles against Beastmen when unexpected Wood Elf allies have attacked the creatures of Chaos from their hiding places, as well as occasions when a Kislev patrol has been drawn to the sounds of fighting to find a small Wood Elf community embattled by Orcs or Chaos marauders.

THE PEOPLE OF KISLEV

Kislev is a country forged from various warring invaders who finally settled alongside each other. The bulk of the nation's population is made up of Ungols, the Gospodars, the Norse, and the last remnants of the Ropsmenn. Tribes such as the Dolgans make their home in Kislev's northern areas, and many of the people that inhabit the south display many traits of the Empire, as it is common for people in this region to interact and mingle the bloodlines.

In fact, Kislev is almost two nations in one. On the one hand, there are the more civilised peoples of the south and the cities, where the lands are relatively fertile. And in the north, particularly north of the Lynsk, there are wild, nomadic tribes. In the time of Sigmar, the harsh lands north-east of the Urskoy were populated by the Ungol tribes, who also dominated the smaller tribes of the Ropsmenn who lived

in what is now Troll Country. Sharing many traits with the Kurgan steppe nomads to the east, the Ungols were a scattered people consisting of nomadic, horse-riding tribesmen. Sigmar's influence did not stretch this far north, and they remained independent from the confederation of tribes founded by Sigmar.

Around the year 1500 IC there was a large westward migration from the eastern steppes, and of particular importance was the arrival of the powerful and wealthy Gospodars. Torn with strife, the Empire was in no position to contest these lands,

and the superior arms and tactics of the Gospodars drove the Ungols to the west and north, who in turn absorbed the Ropsmenn completely. Over the following century, the power of the Gospodars grew, and the city of Kislev was founded. The settlement of Praag grew in size as the Gospodars used the Lynsk to launch incursions into Ungol territory, eventually

forcing the Ungols to accept Gospodar rule (who were now beginning to be called Kislevites after their capital city). By this time, the former Ungol city of Erengard had grown into a busy port ruled by the new Kislevites, and from here, the Kislevites were able to sail the Sea of Claws, trading and fighting with the Norse and on occasion the Empire, as well as keeping the Ungols in check.

"Aye, I fought the grobi in the high pass with some of those horsemen with the feathered wings on their backs. Even though they looked as fancy as Elves, they're good fighters, them boys. Noisy as a Mannish steam engine when they charge, but you ought ta seen the grobi keck their loincloths when they heard them coming!"

—SNORRI STONEHEART, DWARF LONGBEARD

"Do not underestimate these northern Humans, for they fight the warriors of the Dark Gods with a hatred that puts ours to shame. It is beholden to us to aid them, for their fight is our fight, and the secret war would suffer were they to fall."

—NIEADAR SHADOWFALL,
WAYWATCHER OF ATHEL LOREN

"Never trust a Human. Especially one who lives on the very edge of the Realm of Chaos."

—ELDAIN HAWKMOON OF ULTHUAN

"Kislevites grim? You try living in wind with kyazak and the cold forever at your throat. See how happy you be after Kislev winter!"

—UNKNOWN KISLEVITE PEASANT

This state of affairs has existed for over 750 years, and Gospodar and Ungol society has blended over the centuries, to a greater or lesser extent, into the nation of Kislev. The ruling elite, from whom the Tzars and Tzarinas hail, are of Gospodar heritage. The influence of the Gospodar language and beliefs is more evident in the south, particularly in the cities of Kislev and Erengard, while further north, the land becomes more barren, and the horse tribes still hold sway. In fact, Praag has been reclaimed in a large part by the old Ungol nobility, and in many ways is a separate power in the north.

Frequently the bulwark against the tribes of Chaos, the Kislevites relish the debt owed to them by the people of the Empire to the south whom they protect. However, this does not stop a Kislevite from bitterly complaining about this state of affairs at every opportunity. The Kislevites are closer to the people of the Empire than many of them would admit and view them with a kind of patronising humour that one might reserve for a bright but slightly eccentric child.

LANGUAGE

"All their songs are sad, and all their wars are happy."

—POPULAR TILEAN SAYING OF KISLEV

The language spoken by the people of Kislev is known as Kislevarin and is a blend of the original Ungol and Ropsmenn tongues with the addition of the languages brought by the migrating Gospodars. Over the centuries, this has become the dominant of the three languages, with the addition of some Reikspiel words and conventions from the south.

There are, of course, many different dialects within Kislev,

and the language is spoken somewhat differently in different regions of the country, though the differences between these broad dialects are slight. There is almost never any difficulty in mutual understanding, and non-Kislevarin speakers are generally unable to distinguish them without conscious effort. The regional differences correspond mainly to old tribal divisions from hundreds of years ago, the most significant of these (in terms of numbers of speakers) are Sudevarin, which is spoken in the south, Krevarin, which is spoken in the east and centre of the country, and Dolvarin, which is the principal language of the north and of the tribal raiders who plague the farmers. In the stanitsas of the far north, the older tribes and families keep alive the distinctive Górelsk dialect, said to be the unpolluted language of the Ropsmenn, and they take great pride in their culture and language, which is said to be much more musical than standard Kislevarin. Some city dwellers—especially the less affluent population—also have their own distinctive dialects. An example of this is Tzavarin, still spoken by some of the population of Kislev, though these city dialects are now mostly extinct due to assimilation with standard Kislevarin.

Kislevarin is often said to be one of the most difficult languages for non-native speakers to learn, and while difficult for speakers of "classic" Reikspiel, it is not so difficult for those raised in the north and east of the Empire, since the regional dialect of Ostland and Ostermark owes much to early Kislevarin. What makes Kislevarin so difficult to master is that it has an extremely complex gender system, based on the fact that it combines three categories—gender (masculine, feminine, neuter), personality (personal versus non-personal), and vitality (animate versus inanimate).

Over the centuries, Kislevarin has borrowed a large number of words from other languages, most notably Reikspiel, since the Empire and Kislev share a border, and a high proportion of the inhabitants of Kislevite cities are from the Empire. Most such words are adopted by altering the spelling to keep the pronunciation but are written according to Kislevite phonetics. Thus, it is possible for a non-Kislevarin speaker to pick out the odd word here and there from a conversation, such as *Stem-tzak* (Steam Tank) and *Roketz* (Rockets). Here are other examples of borrowed words: *szlachta* (which comes from the Reikspiel word, *adelsgeschlecht*, meaning nobility) and *burmistrz* (which comes from the word *burgomeister*, meaning mayor).

RELIGION IN KISLEV

"Death or Glory...is of no matter."

—KISLEVITE SAYING

The Kislevites are descended from Humans that travelled from the Kurgan tribes of the north and east. In particular, the Kurgan influence is still strong in the north, and the horse clans share many traditions and customs with the likes of Dolgans, Khazags, and other marauder tribes. The ancient traditions of these peoples are more keenly held to amongst the nomads, who see their southern cousins as weakened by the civilising influence of the Empire. In this respect, worship of



the various ancient Kislev Gods varies across the nation, being more prominent in the north, while other Gods have been incorporated into the Kislevite religion in southern lands. In addition, the Gospodars brought with them the Cult of Ursun, which has been established as a dominant religion of Kislev.

As most of the Kislevite ancestry originated from the eastern steppes and the harsh northlands, their Gods represent very important forces in their lives. Various nature and household spirits are worshipped all across the Old World, but this practice is particularly strong in Kislev. These magical creatures are servants and messengers of the Gods in this world and should be treated as such. A fuller discussion of religion in Kislev can be found in the section **Religion and Custom** on page 35.

KISLEVITE DRESS

Clothing in Kislev, as in other lands, reflects an individual's rank, wealth, profession, family status, and locality. Kislev has close ties with lands beyond its borders, which has had an effect on the many different forms of clothing that can be found within its borders, particularly in the upper classes. Kislev's interaction with the Norse and trade with the Empire and beyond means that clothing styles in Kislev are not completely isolated from styles in the rest of the Old World. However, the climate of Kislev governs the clothing types worn by the majority of its people; its long winters and cool summers make closed-up clothing with many layers and furs practical.

Most clothes are made from wools and linens (including hems), the same as the rest of the Old World. Coarse, homespun wool is used for peasant clothes and also for the undergarments and everyday clothes of the merchant classes, and even boyars. Fine, imported fabrics are usually reserved for outer garments and festival costumes. The main imported fabrics come from Tilea and include brocade, velvet, and golden velvet (velvet embroidered with gold thread). Fur is used extensively, and peasant winter clothes are lined with wolf, fox, bear, or rabbit fur. The nobility, however, enjoy beaver, otter, sable, and marten to line their clothes and trim their finery to distinguish them from peasants. As a great deal of time is spent working outdoors, warm, fur hats known as *chapka* are a common sight. Similar in appearance to a hollowed out cake, these fur-lined hats are an essential item in the wardrobe of any Kislevite. Those worn by the nobility have warm flaps that can be brought down and tied with a leather cord under the chin to protect the ears, though the peasant ones often do not because the sound of approaching raiders is muffled by furry flaps.

In opposition to their dour reputation, Kislevite clothing is very colourful. The raw colour of unbleached linen predominates in peasant clothes, but if intended for the nobility, it is often dyed, whereupon it becomes known as *krashenin*. The most common colours include blue, green, and red, though imported fabrics are often dark red, crimson, purple, and azure.

PEASANTS

The primary garb of Kislevite peasants is the ankle-length *rubakha*, a loose shift that can be worn as a man's shirt or a woman's underdress. The *rubakha* is made from linen, though silk from the east is often used by the richer classes. The man's shirt reaches to about mid-thigh and can be worn both hanging out and tucked in, usually with an ornamented belt or military sash. Most *rubakha* are white or off-white, and the man's shirt frequently has red piping at the seams and red underarm gussets. Both the shirt and dress are decorated with bands of embroidery at the cuffs and around the collar and hem. Sometimes a band of embroidery also follows the collar slit.

Kislevite women spend an inordinate amount of time on fantastically complex decorations for their clothes, using embroidery in strong primary colours, gold and silver thread, semi-precious stones, and copious amounts of freshwater pearls. An obligatory part of a woman's peasant garments is the belt, and the richer a village inhabitant is, the more prominent the ornamentation, the higher the quality of their manufacture, and the more expensive the utilised materials. Most peasant women also wear elaborate headdresses (*venets* for maidens and *kika* for married women), earrings, beads, copper bracelets, and blunt-pointed, hand-woven shoes known as *lapti*.

CITY DWELLERS AND NOBLES

The dress of Kislevite city dwellers and nobles is, unsurprisingly, more complicated than that worn by peasants and includes a greater number of items. Over the underdress, many women wear one or several gowns of straight or widening cut and an open-front over-garment known as a *raspashnoe*. The number of garments depends on the season and material circumstances of the family, the outer dress being shorter than the lower garment and with wider sleeves. The hem and cuffs of the lower garment are visible, forming a stepped silhouette, and as in the traditional dress of peasants, a belt is almost always added. The nobility often wear a cloak called *korzna*, which is normally rectangular or semicircular in cut. Fastened by a brooch or buckle on the right shoulder or in the middle of the chest, the *korzna* hangs to the ground in wide pleats and is sometimes gathered at the waist with a belt. On cold autumn or winter days, nobles sometimes wear a sheepskin coat known as a *kozshukhi* beneath their bright, expensive fabrics.

The headdress of city dwellers has much in common with peasants, though the decoration is more complex and intricate, utilising embroidered chains of cloth that drape to necklaces of coloured beads. Noblewomen often wear large, folding silver bracelets over their sleeves at the wrist and forearm, though those of lower status must be content with coloured glass. The garb of noble city dwellers is most often cut from expensive, imported fabrics that demonstrate the owner's wealth with multi-coloured cloth, silver and gold embroidery, and expensive furs. Boyar Beledna was said to have given his wife a coat lined with fox fur when a single fox pelt was worth more than a peasant family's yearly earnings.

To distinguish themselves from peasants, city dwellers and the ruling class wear boots instead of shoes—giving rise to the expression “living in the boot”—which indicates that a person is wealthy. Tall, leather boots and riding boots are a status symbol with roots in the past when such things indicated the wearer was either a horse warrior or a person of note who could afford his own horse.

JEWELLERY

The jewellery worn by Kislevites serves to display wealth, but many are charms designed to ward against the evil eye, and thus, much of it is designed to make noise to scare away evil spirits. Earrings are uncommon, but bracelets, rings, beads, and necklaces can be seen on virtually every Kislevite of note. The majority of peasant jewellery is made of poorer metals (copper, bronze, or low-grade silver), while noble jewellery is fashioned from silver and gold. Jewellery is often commissioned by individuals, and expensive gold and silver jewellery with precious and semiprecious stones are often passed down for many generations.

KISLEVITE PRIESTS

Priests of Kislev are almost all warriors and wear loose clothing that allows maximum freedom in battle. Priests wear a dark brown or black hair rubakha that reaches to their feet with narrow sleeves over the hands and a wide belt. These incredibly uncomfortable garments are fashioned from a coarse, wool fabric and are worn directly on the body as a form of self-flagellation. Most also wear a cloak that reaches below the knee and is fastened at the waist by a bear-stamped buckle. Woven shoes or boots are worn on the feet, as priests are exempt from the traditional convention that states boots are for nobility and shoes are for peasants.

KISLEV CALENDAR

Kislev uses three dating systems, the Calendar of the Empire, the Gospodarin Calendar, and the Ungol Calendar. The Ungol Calendar is now only used for the northern tribes, and it works on the principle of a 4-year cycle called an Urtza, dating from the time that the great Bear God, Ursun, first awoke from hibernation. This date roughly equates to 500 years before Sigmar's time. Dates are also known to vary from tribe to tribe, so that while one tribe may say that the great chieftain Eskadar fought the battle of Lynsk in 452 (1310 IC = (1310+500)/4), another might say it is in 453 (1312 IC). For these reasons, it is only of interest to scholars for its eccentricity more than its functional use.

The Gospodarin Calendar sees far more widespread use in Kislev, owing its popularity to dominance of Kislev city and the influence the Tzarina holds over the majority of her people. The Gospodarin Calendar traces its origins to 1524 IC with the founding of the city of Kislev. Since the Great War against Chaos, many Kislevites, especially in the south, have embraced the Imperial Calendar. Such is the extent of its use that it has now become common for dates to be given in both the Gospodarin Calendar and the Imperial Calendar.

KVAS— THE OIL OF A NATION

“Spent some time drinking with the Kislevites. The kvas, as they call it, isn't bad, but the koumiss—that'll bleach the hairs on your beard! I don't remember much about the rest of the night, but when I woke, my pockets were empty and my ale stolen. I'll not forget that in a hurry!”

—GOTTRI HALF-HAMMER, DWARF MERCHANT

The word *kvas* translates as “sour milk” and is, after water, the most popular drink in Kislev. It is a drink that transcends the normal distinctions of class that hold sway over all other aspects of Kislevite society. Peasants drink it with gusto, and nobles prefer it to the weak southern wines and brandies brought by foreigners. Such is the Kislevite fondness for kvas, that it is used in almost every aspect of life, from cooking (where it serves as stock for many daily dishes) to medicine (where it is credited for saving many peasants from scurvy during times of famine). Its curative powers were also said to extend to colds, dropsy, fever, and diseases of the intestines, but whether this can be attributed to the kvas or the Kislevites' legendary constitution from drinking the stuff will likely never be known.

There are many recipes for kvas, each stanitsa claiming that it has the definitive recipe and that all others are “like drinking yellow snow,” but in general, they have the same ingredients, just in different proportions. Kvas is made from malt, rye, or wheat flour and boiling water. This dense mass is blended until the village hetman declares it is ready; then it's put in a heated oven for a day and night. Afterwards, it is dissolved in water and left in a room for a few hours before being poured into wineskins. The strength of kvas varies from place to place (as does the flavour) for, as Kislevites are fond of saying, there are as many different types of kvas as grass on the steppe.

THE RULERS OF KISLEV

The rulers of Kislev are powerful figures descended from the line of the ancient warrior kings and Khan-Queens of the Gospodars. On the very forefront of the wars against Chaos, they rule a land that must always stand ready to fight the forces of the northern tribes and their terrible Gods. From the icy fortress of her capital city of Kislev, Tzarina Katarin rules her land with an aloof majesty that has earned her the epithet of “Ice Queen.” The daughter of the fiery and charismatic Tzar Boris, she ascended to the throne in 2517 IC, following her father's death in battle whilst leading an army north of the Lynsk into Troll Country. She is the latest in a long line of Tzarinas descended from the ancient Khan-Queens of the Gospodars, the powerful tribal group that migrated west centuries ago and became the dominant peoples of what was to grow into the nation of Kislev.

A great sorceress in her own right, her power is said to come from the land of Kislev, its icy soul and bleak tundra giving

her command of the elements and mastery of that form of wizardry known as Ice Magic. Indeed, some whisper she is the living reincarnation of the very first Khan-Queen, Miska, so complete is her grasp of this dangerous branch of magic. Upon her ascension to the throne of Kislev, it is said the Bokha Palaces grew a new wing, hundreds of yards in length and formed entirely of glittering ice. This wondrous creation would be beyond all but the most powerful Ice Mages, and it is here Katarin remains for most of the time, granting audiences in an immense chamber of magically woven hoarfrost. Some believe she simply prefers the chill of these frozen corridors, while others say it is a display of her power to overawe would-be enemies and foreign ambassadors.

Where Tzar Bokha was a man who preferred to lead from the front and was renowned for his courage and leadership, the Tzarina, in keeping with her icy powers, is aloof and remote, preferring to work through agents and generals. Only under the direst circumstances does the Tzarina join her armies (known in Kislev as *pulks*), but when she does, it is often upon a mighty steed whose flanks shimmer with glinting ice crystals and whose breath is the winter wind, or she rides an armoured sled drawn by a team of identical beasts. The Tzarina carries a fearsome warblade known as Fearfrost, a weapon said to have been forged by the ancient Khan-Queen Miska of the Gospodars, whose intense cold can kill with a single scratch. This blade has passed from Tzarina to Tzarina over the ages, and only a Tzarina can wield the blade. Were a man to lift the blade, he would find himself frozen solid in a heartbeat.

On those rare occasions she does lead her army in battle, the devotion lavished upon her is beyond that which might be expected of such a remote ruler. Her power over the elements is clear proof that the blood of the Khan-Queens flows in her veins, and the Ungols of the north fear and respect her as one of the ancient warrior witches from their oldest myths.

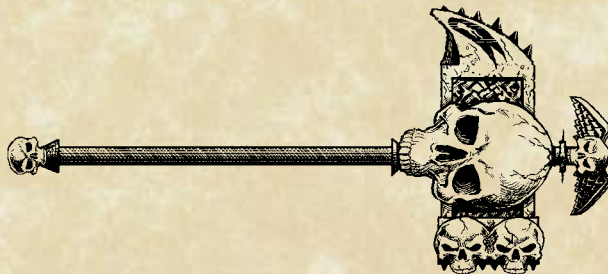
Though the Tzarina's grip on her icy land is firm, even she cannot rule a land as large and fractious as Kislev on her own. The spirit of stubborn independence that makes Kislev such a formidable nation of warriors means it is only with the support of the nobility that a ruler can maintain control. Beneath the Tzarina are a number of high-ranking nobles known as *boyarin*, each of whom commands an army in times of war.

Each boyarin is a hereditary ruler, the title passing from father to child (boy or girl), and the lands and villages nearby owe him fealty and loyalty. In return, the village can expect protection and support from the local lord in times of famine and war, but they are beholden to answer his call to battle.



When the Tzarina gathers her armies, the boyarin send riders out to the villages for which they are responsible, and a muster of warriors begins with a speed that puts most other nations to shame. Where the men of other nations might only fight when their own lives are threatened, Kislevites have a strong bond with the land and its people, and the idea of invaders despoiling their homeland is abhorrent to them. It is considered a great honour to fight for Kislev, and there is no shortage of brave young men who seek glory and honour as a horse archer or lancer.

In each stanitsa, the people are led by a hetman, a man who has displayed the qualities of a warrior and leader and whom the villagers respect. Where the title of boyarin is passed from father to his offspring, the hetman of a village earns his place, whether he seeks such office or not. The hetman must see his village through times both good and bad and rule his people with wisdom and courage. He will be a battle-proven warrior who can command the defences of his village should it come under attack from raiders or tribes of Orcs and Goblins. Many noble families and boyarin can trace their origins back to a hetman of a humble stanitsa, though most prefer not to.



HISTORY OF KISLEV

"You look down on us and think we are little better than barbarians, but you are glad we here, for without us here, the northern tribes would be dining on the flesh of your children in your burning homes. But for the courage that flows in our veins would your lands be theirs. Look down on us? You should get on your knees and thank us every day!"

—VITALIA KOVASH, KISLEVITE WINGED LANCER



The history of Kislev is one of war and battles, of heroes and horrors. For as long as men have lived north of the Urskoy, there has been blood spilled for this bleak and inhospitable realm. The land has its origins in the fierce tribes that ruled the steppe and made constant war upon one another since ancient times. At the time of Sigmar, the harsh lands northeast of the Urskoy were populated by the many Ungol and Dolgan tribes.

These tribal groups lived a warlike existence on the steppe and dominated the smaller tribes of the Ropsmenn who lived in what is now the Troll Country. Sharing many traits with the Kurgan steppe nomads to the east, the Ungols were a scattered people consisting of nomadic horse-riding tribesmen. These warriors were master horsemen and lived and fought in the saddle, perfecting a way of war that was unmatched by any other tribes of the steppe at the time. The Dolgans were already a people in decline, and their ways were looked down upon by most other tribes as being unclean—possibly because the Gods they worshipped bore a striking resemblance those of the Chaos Wastes.

THE TRIBES OF KISLEV

Living in family groups, each tribe would range across the steppe, stopping each night and erecting a camp that could be struck with incredible speed. Everything the tribe needed could be carried on the backs of their horses, and each tribe possessed its own identity and cultural traditions. Many of the tribes that held to these traditions have been forgotten over the centuries as other tribes, starvation, or disease wiped them out on the steppe, but many others have survived in superstition, name, or tale to this day. To live any other way was unimaginable to the tribes, and thus, the steppe peoples grew strong on plunder

and war but could never become more than they were. No crops were sown, no buildings were erected, and no roots could be put down, for a tribal culture based on finding new grazing lands could never remain static for long.

Sigmar's influence did not stretch this far north, and the steppe tribes remained independent from the confederation of tribes he founded. The neighbouring Teutogen tribes of the Empire existed in more or less peace with the tribes of Kislev, though there were skirmishes and border raids between these nomadic tribesmen.

THE NORSII

The tribes of the north were fierce and warlike, and they lived for battle and the life of the steppes. To these warriors, fighting one another was as natural as breathing, and such a life bred men strong and honourable. War was a way of life, and the worth of a man was measured in how many souls he had sent to the next life, how many horses he owned, and how many sons he had fathered. Further south, Sigmar consolidated his hold on the Empire, uniting the scattered tribes of the Empire under his rule and driving out those who would not bend the knee to him. The ancient Norsii tribes refused to accept Sigmar's rulership and were scattered by his armies, driven northwards beyond the Middle Mountains and into Kislev.

The arrival of such a large body of warriors was met with understandable hostility by the tribes of Kislev, and the Ungols made war on the Norsii, driving them further north into the frozen lands of Norsca, breaking the host of their greatest hero, Ekil Bloodheart, in battle at the edge of the Chaos Wastes. Tales are still told of this giant, bearded warrior who hacked off his

own head to deny his enemies the pleasure. Impressed with his bravery, the Ungols carried his remains south into the Troll Country and built a great cairn to house his body. Some say this cairn has long since vanished, while others maintain it remains undiscovered in the depths of the Troll Country. Whatever the truth of the matter, Ungol legends say that the spirit of Bloodheart still howls across the steppe the night before a battle, judging the warriors who are to fight and ensuring they are worthy of travelling to the next world upon their death.

THE GREENSKIN MENACE

While the Ungols fought the Norsii, the tribes of Orcs of the Worlds Edge Mountains were growing restless. And under the leadership of Warlord Gortork, a massive host of Greenskins began ravaging the eastern lands of Kislev. The Orcs rampaged from the east and devastated much of the steppe, destroying tribal homelands with wanton brutality as they marched towards the more fertile southern plains. Understanding the tribes of the steppe could not hold back such a force and that these Orcs would eventually make their way south if allowed to go unchecked, Sigmar sent many of his warriors to aid the Ungols against the Orcs.

At the site of what is now the city of Kislev, Sigmar and the Ungol war chief Subotan fought the horde of Gortork. Sigmar and Subotan fought side by side and hacked their way through the howling warlord's bodyguard before Sigmar was finally able to slay him with a mighty blow from his magical warhammer, Ghal Maraz. Both leaders swore a blood oath that should either of their lands be threatened by invaders, they would answer the call to battle and fight alongside one another again. Sigmar sent warriors to Kislev many more times, though he was never again to personally fight upon the steppe. In return, Ungol war chiefs sent some of their greatest horsemen to aid Sigmar when he marched to battle a mighty host of Orcs and Goblins alongside the Dwarf King Kurgan Ironbeard at the legendary battle of Blackfire Pass. Thus was born the eternal alliance that has joined Kislev and the Empire together since then, though it was not until after the Great War against Chaos that it became a formalised treaty.

THE MIGRATION OF THE GOSPODARS

After the Battle of Blackfire Pass, Sigmar returned to the Empire to build his realm, and the Ungol tribesmen returned to dominate the steppes, fighting many battles against bands of vicious raiders from the Chaos Wastes of the north and migrating tribesmen from the east. Over the centuries, these tribesmen grew in numbers, until it seemed as though every day brought fresh warriors down from the High Pass.

Around 1500 IC, the largest westward migration from the eastern steppes began. Increasing expansion of the Chaos Wastes had forced the Gospodar tribes of the eastern steppes to move westwards over the mountains. Led by the Khan-Queen Miska, the Gospodars were powerful and wealthy and possessed an unmatched genius in warfare, their skill in



fighting from horseback superior to that of even the Ungols. The Khan-Queen was not only a warrior of great skill and courage but also a sorceress of unmatched power. Her legions of horse warriors and the power of her magic scattered the Ungols from the steppe and earned her a place in their

nightmares for centuries to come. Together with the Khan-Queen's magic, the Gospodars' superior arms and tactics drove the Ungols west and north into the land occupied by the Ropsmenn, where the two tribal groups fought for dominance.

IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF KISLEV

Note: As with all things historical, it is impossible to be certain as to the reliability of some of these dates, as the Kislevite practice of placing their rulers at whatever battle they feel most fitting of their skills and temperament seems designed to give the history scholar headaches. Similarly, dates of ancient history are equally vague, and this historian hopes his readers may forgive any lapses caused by the vagaries of current records.

Gospodarin Calendar	Event
C -5000	Elven colonisation of the Old World finally reaches the site of modern-day Erengard. This outpost marks the furthest the Elves penetrate to the east and north.
C -3800	Dwarf armies from Karak Vlag and Karak Ungor combine to drive the Elves out of the Lynsk estuary and the southern coast of the Sea of Claws.
C -3000	Greenskin attacks force the Dwarfs to abandon their settlements along the Rivers Lynsk and Urskoy.
C -1600	The lands north of the Urskoy are peopled by the Ropsmenn and Ungols. Except for border raids and the odd skirmish, peace exists between them and the Teutogens who border their territory.
-543	Goblin tribes settle in the forests between the Lynsk and Upper Talabec.
C -1828	The Thurini tribe migrates from the east of the Worlds Edge Mountains along the River Lynsk to the south-eastern shore of the Sea of Claws.
-1524	The Empire is founded under the warrior-king Sigmar. He scatters the ancient Norsii people from the shores of the Sea of Claws, and they flee northwards. The Ungols drive them further north into what is now Norsca. Sigmar aids the Ungols fighting Orcs of the Worlds Edge Mountains, and peace exists between the Empire and Ungols after they fight together at the Battle of Blackfire Pass.
C -45	Over several years, increasing expansion by the tribes of the Chaos Wastes forces the Gospodar tribes to move westwards.
C -30	Khan-Queen Miska leads the Gospodar tribe over the High Pass, driving back the Ungol people.
-27	Ungol Warlord Hethis Chaq's army defeats a Ropsmenn host led by King Weiran on the cliffs overlooking the Sea of Claws. The Ropsmenn are scattered, and the Ungols take their lands.
1	Under the rule of the Khan-Queen Shoika, work begins on the building of the great Gospodar capital, Kislev. She takes the title Tzarina to indicate her new reign over the lands north of the Urskoy.
3	Norvard, greatest settlement of the Ungol is captured by the Gospodars and renamed Erengard. This event effectively completes the Gospodar conquest of the lands north of the Urskoy.
778	Great War against Chaos. Asavar Kul leads a terrifying host of Chaos warriors south into Kislev. Magnus the Pious appears in Nuln and unites the Empire. Tzar Alexis appeals to Magnus for aid. Bolgasgrad and other settlements along the Lynsk are abandoned. Chaos fleets range across the Sea of Claws and attack merchant ships. The siege of Praag begins in spring. Magnus the Pious arrives in Middenheim and splits his forces. The mounted troops depart to attempt to relieve Praag, while Magnus leads the rest of his army through Talabheim to Kislev. Praag falls in the winter, and the siege of Kislev begins. Battle of Kislev breaks the Chaos forces.
785-941	The Reign of Tzarina Kattarin the Bloody ends when Tsarevich Pavel strikes the blow that ends her life, imprisoning her corpse in a block of ice where she remains to this day.
968	Tzar Vladimir Bokha dies fighting Goblins east of Kislev. His son, Boris, inherits a nation that has done little to recover from the Great War against Chaos.
969	Tzar Boris Bokha defeats a large army of Beastmen outside Praag, earning the title Radii Bokha (Bokha the Red).
973	Radii Bokha returns from the wilds with the war-bear Urskin and becomes the first high priest of Ursun in over four hundred years; he takes the title Boris Ursus.
993	Tzar Boris dies in battle whilst leading an army north of the Lynsk into Troll Country. At an unnamed river crossing, the Tzar falls fighting Hetzar Feydaj. Tzar Boris's daughter, Katarin, becomes the Tzarina of Kislev, beginning the reign of the Ice Queen.
997	The time known as the "Spring Driving." The hordes of the Chaos Warlord Archaon rampage south and cross the Lynsk. Numerous combined armies of the Tzarina and the Empire are defeated.
998	The Storm of Chaos. The power of the Dark Gods grows in the north as the northern tribes are united by Archaon. Chaos armies led by Surtha Lenk and Aelfric Cyenwulf ravage much of northern Kislev. Lenk is defeated by Boyarin Kurkosk at Mazhorod, and Cyenwulf is beaten at Urzebya by an army of the Empire and the Ice Queen. Archaon leads his victorious armies south but is defeated outside the walls of Middenheim by the defenders of the Empire.

One of the Ungol's strongest bastions in the steppes was Praag, but soon, even that was to fall to the Gospodars. Its walls were cast down by the Khan-Queen's magic, and its people were driven westwards to their former capital, the port city of Norvard. Having dominated the Ropsmenn before, the Ungols quickly gained the upper hand in the wars they were now forced to fight for territory, and Warlord Hethis Chaq defeated the last Ropsmenn host led by King Weiran on the cliffs overlooking the Sea of Claws. With this defeat, the Ropsmenn were effectively a destroyed people, and the Ungols completely absorbed them into their own culture. Though even to this day, there are scattered bands of horse tribes in the Troll Country who claim to be the living descendants of the original Ropsmenn.

BIRTH OF A NATION

The Gospodars further expanded their territory westwards and even pushed into the lands of Sigmar's people. Torn with strife in the period known as the Time of Three Emperors, the Empire was in no position to contest these lands, and whole swathes of the north of the Empire became Gospodar territory. Much of this has since been won back, but as the power of the Gospodars grew, so too did their status as a distinct kingdom. The Khan-Queen Miska did not live to see the land she had begun to forge take shape, for she vanished into the north, claiming to have seen a vision of a terrible future where she would once again be needed to lead her people to salvation.

Leaving her fearsome warblade, Fearfrost, to her daughter Shoika, Miska gathered her most trusted warriors to her and rode into the Chaos Wastes. She was never seen again, but one of the most enduring legends of Kislev is that the Khan-Queen will return in Kislev's darkest hour to save it from destruction. Some people whisper that she has already done so in the guise of the Ice Queen, and the more northerly tribes of Kislev certainly fear the Tzarina Katarin as much as they dreaded Miska.

Under the rule of Shoika, the city that was to become Kislev was founded, and the realm began to take shape into the nation it is today. To better demonstrate her dominance and rule over the nation, Shoika took the title of Tzarina, instigating the first year of the Gospodarin Calendar and the establishment of the nation of Kislev. Her first act as Tzarina was to march on Norvard, the great Ungol port on the western coast of Kislev. This mighty trading port was the key to placing Kislev at the forefront of trade with the rest of the world, and Shoika realised the Gospodars' dream of a united land would not be realised while Norvard remained in Ungol hands. Less than two years after her crowning, the port of Norvard fell to her armies, and it was renamed Erengard. The Ungols who survived the bloody siege fled into the north, where they were ruthlessly hunted until they were eventually forced to accept the Gospodars' rule (who were now beginning to be called Kislevites after their capital city).

Within a few years, the settlement of Praag was again growing in size, and Erengard had become one of the busiest ports in the Old World. From here, the Kislevites were able to sail the Sea of Claws, trading and fighting with the Norse—and occasionally the Empire—as well as keeping the few remaining Ungol tribes that refused to submit to their rule in check.

This state of affairs has existed for over 750 years, and Gospodar and Ungol society has merged over the centuries, to a greater or lesser extent, into the nation of Kislev. The ruling elite, from whom the Tzars and Tzarinas hail, are, unsurprisingly, all of Gospodar heritage, though the influence of their language and beliefs is more evident in the south, particularly in the cities of Kislev and Erengard. Further north, where the land becomes more barren and the horse tribes still hold sway, there's been a resurgence in the old ways. In fact, Praag has been reclaimed in large part by the old Ungol nobility and, in many ways, is a separate power in the north.

THE TRIBES OF THE DARK GODS

Throughout history, Kislev has bred hardy people, not only because of the harsh climate and generally infertile lands but also due to the constant depredations by raiders from the Chaos Wastes. There are usually constant, small-scale affairs from individual warbands and tribes heading south in search of glory and plunder. Known by the Kislevites as *kyazak*, these raiding parties are an ever-present threat to settlements and caravans north of the Lynsk, and some even venture as far south as to cross the Lynsk.

The incursions are mostly short lived—usually lasting for only a season at a time—and either end when winter draws in or when the invaders are driven back by the armies of the Kislevites. These armies are drawn from the scattered stanitsas and towns of the Kislev oblast, each providing a standing force of warriors, much like a militia. Ungol horse archers patrol the northern reaches of the country, while settlements with a great Gospodar heritage pool their resources to create squadrons (or *rotas* as they are known) of the famed winged lancers. This tradition is continued by the cities, and the Tzarina can command a large number of winged lancers drawn from the families of the richest boyarin and their household troops. But every year, the kyazak grow more daring, their attacks driving deeper and deeper across the Lynsk, until even the outlying settlements near Erengard and Kislev come under threat.

Occasionally, a particularly powerful chieftain or warlord will rise in Norsca or amongst the Kurgan tribes. They weld together a rough confederation of several tribes and launch attacks into Kislev. At these times, the various rotas of Kislev are drawn together into larger army groups called pulks. These pulks are invariably under the command of a boyarin of Gospodar heritage and are the closest Kislev has to a standing army. Sometimes, a single pulk is enough to see off the threat, but other times, two, three, or more pulks may combine their forces to counter an ambitious marauding warlord.

THE GREAT WAR AGAINST CHAOS

The greatest of these incursions is known and remembered with evil shudders and led to what would become known as The Great War against Chaos. The power of the Dark Gods had been

growing stronger in the Chaos Wastes for many years, and the cold north winds had been blowing particularly hard—telling those with a skill for reading such things that something terrible was soon to happen. Sure enough, in the winter of 2301 IC, the half-Daemon warlord Asavar Kul united the tribes of the north and launched an attack into Kislev. An army of Kislevites and Empire soldiers mustered to face Kul but was massacred north of Praag, and the horde of Daemons, monsters, beasts, and tribesmen advanced along the western foothills of the Worlds Edge Mountains. The Chaos army fought and destroyed a contingent of Kislevites defending the last bridges of the River Lynsk, and Kul's forces crossed the last barrier between it and the city of Praag.

The Siege of Praag lasted throughout the spring and summer, the city's brave defenders hurling back their attackers time and again with desperate heroics and stalwart bravery. But as winter set in and the year drew to a close, Praag fell, and the hordes of Chaos ran amok. The raw power of Chaos engulfed the city, and Praag was changed forever, its survivors fused together in hellish, inhuman shapes. Living bodies melted into the walls of the city, so that it became impossible to tell flesh from stone. Distorted faces peered from walls, agonised limbs writhed from the pavements, and pillars of stone groaned with voices that came from once-Human lips. Praag had become a living nightmare and a grim warning of the suffering that lay ahead if the warriors of the Dark Gods were victorious.

MAGNUS THE PIOUS

As the Empire readied for full-scale invasion, a leader known as Magnus the Pious arose from the horror of these dark times. Magnus raised a massive following among the common folk of the Empire and marched northwards from city to city, gathering about him an army the likes of which had not been seen for an age. By the time the army reached the city of Middenheim, it was the largest single force in the history of the Empire, and it was so large that Magnus had to divide his troops into two armies, as no one place could provide enough food and water to support both.

The first army, consisting of vengeful Kislevite lancers and glory-hungry knights, rode with all speed to Praag in the hope of relieving the siege. Too late, these warriors discovered the horror that Praag had become and quickly turned south to wreak their vengeance upon the Chaos horde. Magnus marched his second army directly to the city of Kislev, hoping to re-supply at the capital before continuing onwards. Upon reaching Kislev, Magnus discovered the city already under siege by Kul's army with but a few Kislevites and a contingent of Dwarfs from Karaz-a-Karak desperately fighting to defend it.

Magnus immediately ordered the charge, and his enemies were scattered by this sudden attack. Grim-faced Empire soldiers drove a wedge deep within the Chaos host, and victory seemed assured, but Asavar Kul was a mighty leader and rallied his warriors and used their greater numbers to encircle Magnus's army. Horrifying Daemons slaughtered entire regiments, while evil sorcerers unleashed powerful, ancient magic. Magnus's army was surrounded, and it seemed that the fate of Kislev was sealed.

As Kul's warriors fell upon Magnus's army in the final attack, the Kislevite lancers and Imperial knights returning from

Praag appeared over the ridge of what would become known as the Gora Geroyev, the Hill of Heroes, and thundered into their enemies with hatred burning in their hearts. The Dwarfs and remaining defenders charged from the city, and Magnus seized this last, desperate chance for victory. The Chaos hordes faltered as they suddenly faced no less than three armies. The Kislevites were driven to wild fury by the terror wrought upon their beloved land, and the host of Asavar Kul was slaughtered by the implacable anger of the combined forces. The army of Chaos was shattered, and thousands of its warriors were hacked down as they turned to flee in a rout.

THE RED BOKHA

For the next two centuries, Kislev struggled to recover from the devastation caused by the Great War. Its people had been massacred and its towns reduced to rubble—or worse, been consumed by the Realm of Chaos. The corrupted city of Praag was razed to the ground and rebuilt, but an evil taint has forever remained over this city, and people from Praag are still viewed with suspicion by others. Many had died in the war, and over the next two hundred years, all manner of foul creatures took advantage of this state of affairs—rampaging Greenskins from the mountains, Beastmen from the Troll Country, and Skaven from unknown warrens beneath the earth. Tzar Vladimir Bokha was the first Tzar since the time of the Great War to begin a systematic campaign to push these enemies from his lands, and his initial efforts met with great success, though he was to die in battle against Goblins to the east of Kislev.

Vladimir's son, Boris Bokha was a fiery, passionate warrior, and it was said he was born with the sound of the Bloodheart howling on the wind above him—a good omen for a warrior—and the hags predicted he would fight hard and die well. Boris continued his father's work, emptying the treasuries to hire mercenaries to re-train the Kislev army, rebuilding bridges, roads, and towns and importing black powder and engineers from the Empire. Though it almost bankrupted his family (and several other noble families in the bargain), Tzar Boris' reign will be forever remembered for his driving spirit and eagerness to reclaim the lands that had become infested with Goblins, Trolls, Beastmen, and other vile creatures.

Tzar Boris was also instrumental in a revival of the Cult of Ursun, which had slowly been overtaken by worship of Ulric, Taal, and other foreign Gods. To do so, he undertook the trial of initiation that priests of Ursun must overcome and went into the forests to tame a bear. He was not seen or heard of for eighteen days, and many feared he had met a gruesome fate in the depths of the icy forests. Preparations began for the coronation of his infant daughter Katarin when the search parties came across his unconscious form on the nineteenth day. His still body was guarded by a bear of gigantic proportions that would not allow anyone near. The Tzar was surrounded by the corpses of over two dozen wolves, and the snow was red with their blood. Nothing the searchers could do would entice the bear away from their ruler or convince it that they meant no harm. Finally, after another day had passed, Boris awoke, and the bear allowed the searchers to approach and tend to their ruler's wounds.

The tale Boris related upon his return to Kislev has since passed into folklore, though few doubt the truth of it. Four days before being found by the searchers and after much wandering, he came across the mightiest bear he had ever seen, with teeth and claws like sword blades. Taking this as a sign from Ursun, he had confronted the beast, and it charged him, the ground shaking with the fury of its charge and a bloodcurdling roar echoing through the forest. With his bare hands, he fended off the creature's attacks but could not overpower it. The struggle lasted a full day before a wolf pack, drawn by the scent of their combined blood, attacked. The wolves immediately went for the bear, but Boris sprang to its aid, crushing their skulls with his fists and tearing them from its back. Boris was badly wounded, however, and fell beneath the attacks of the wolves. As the beasts closed in for the kill, the bear protected his erstwhile enemy from the common foe. It stood over the supine Tzar, tearing the wolves apart with its claws and savaging them with its powerful jaws. Boris had slipped into unconsciousness, yet each time he had drifted awake, the bear had been there, protecting him from the wolves. The bear returned to Kislev with the Tzar, and from then on, whenever Boris took to the field of battle, it was atop the back of Urskin (which means bear-brother), both a symbol of Ursun's power and affection for Boris and an implacable enemy in battle.

Tzar Boris met his end in battle in 2517 IC whilst leading a pulk north of the Lynsk into the Troll Country. At an unnamed river crossing, the Tzar charged deep into the Kurgan army of Hetzar Feydaj but was soon surrounded and cut off from the rest of his army. He and Urskin fought with all the might and fury of the Bear God, but even Red Boris could not triumph against such odds. Urskin was able to fight his way clear of the Kurgans and carry the Tzar back to the rest of the army, but it was already too late; the Tzar had taken a score of wounds, each enough to be mortal. Only when the battle was won did the Tzar slide from the back of Urskin and die. His faithful mount roared in mourning for a full night before vanishing into the bleak northlands, and legend has it that to this day Urskin continues to hunt down the creatures of Chaos that slew his master.

With the death of Tzar Boris, the now fully grown Katarin became the Tzarina of Kislev, the latest in a long line of rulers descended from the ancient Khan-Queens of the Gospodars. She rules with a cold majesty, beloved by her subjects and feared by her enemies. But barely four years into her reign, her land was to face the greatest threat to Kislev since the Great War against Chaos.

THE STORM OF CHAOS

Tales abounded of Archaon the Everchosen, a mighty warlord who gathered an army such as had not been seen in the northern wastes since the Great War against Chaos. In response, an army of the Empire led by Grand Theogonist Volkmar the Grim of the Cult of Sigmar, marched north at the head of a fanatical army of flagellants and soldiers from Talabecland to do battle with Archaon. The two armies made war across the barren tundra of the Troll Country, but Volkmar was cut down and his army destroyed. In the wake of this defeat, Archaon led his host of marauders, Daemons, and monsters southwards.



With invasion imminent, The Emperor Karl-Franz summoned the rulers of the Old World to the Conclave of Light in Altdorf, and the races of Humans, Dwarfs, and Elves came together to plan how best to fight the forces of Chaos. The lands of Kislev were suffering greatly in this latest incursion, as Archaon's lieutenant, D'aggorn the Exalted, laid siege to the city of Kislev while Archaon led his horde against Erengard. Where previous armies of marauders had become bogged down in Kislev, Archaon knew he had to strike for the Empire without delay and took Erengard swiftly when Norse raiders attacked from the sea. Refugees and bloodied survivors of the invasion of Kislev poured southwards, but by now, the Emperor had rallied his armies and rode out to do battle. While the Dwarfs of Karak Kadrin held Peak Pass against Archaon's general, Vardek Crom, battle began between Archaon's horde and the armies of Middenland, Ostland, and Hochland.

Archaon's army reached Middenheim, and the land around the mighty city echoed to the raucous clamour of battle as the brave soldiers of the Empire and Kislev fought the innumerable hordes. Thousands died each day, but the allied armies slowly began to turn the tide against Archaon. The warlord's army was eventually broken and scattered to the four winds, the allies showing no mercy to those they caught.

KISLEV ENDURES

To live in such a blood-soaked land seems folly to those of other lands, but the Kislevites and their ancestors have spilt blood every year to take and protect their lands. Whilst one Kislevite still draws breath, there will be one who will defend the land against the northern hordes.

It can be no other way, for Kislev is land and land is Kislev.

POLITICS OF KISLEV

"Of course the Tzarina is our ruler, and her authority is boundless. You still aren't going in without the boyar's say-so."

—DMIROV IRINASYN,
GUARD ON THE ARMOURY AT NEKOLTRA



From the outside, Kislev appears to be a centralised monarchy, ruled with icy resolve by the Tzarina Katarin. That is exactly what the Tzarina wants everyone to think. Within Kislev, one of the most important forces in politics is her attempt to make reality match the image. The other most important force, unchanged for centuries, is the constant threat of destruction from the forces brooding in the north. The Storm of Chaos brought that threat home to everyone, and the Tzarina is trying to exploit it to reinforce her position.

THE THREAT OF DARKNESS

The threat from the wastes to the north and east of Kislev is by far the most important factor in Kislevite politics. The threat is real, is always imminent, and without any warning can become utterly devastating. All leaders are assessed in terms of how well they can defend people from this threat, and no other political dispute can be allowed to get in the way of defence.

The constant threat of war means that people only rise up against their overlords when they're thought to be hindering the defence against the north. Otherwise, it would be foolish to

waste effort fighting another Human when foul perversions of nature might attack at any moment. As a result, most uprisings happen near the borders of Kislev, when the leaders to the south are perceived to be withdrawing troops or other resources needed for local defence. The performance of the Tzarina's forces during the Spring Driving—when Archagon crossed the Lynsk and defeated the combined forces of the Tzarina and the Empire—has dampened the desire for revolution for the moment, but this sentiment will not last forever.

It might be thought that a common purpose would smother all political disputes. When the hordes are actually flowing over the steppes, it does, but most of the time, disputes continue. However, the most important political disputes, the ones over which people will not compromise, are almost invariably concerned with the best way to defend the land. Often, this means that the peasants put up with new taxes, rather than risk weakening their defences, but it can also lead to the nobility withdrawing unpopular taxes, as discontent among the common folk makes for less effective warriors. But when both sides think conceding would undermine their defences, things can, and do, get very unpleasant.

— STRUCTURES OF RULERSHIP —

Kislev is a large and mostly empty country, with leagues of land containing little more than herds of wild horses. Such vast distances making governance a challenge, even more so with the Tzarina's idealised vision of how she should govern. If all things were equal, she would delegate day-to-day rule to local leaders. In reality, the people are far more autonomous than even the Tzarina would wish. There are stanitsas where the ataman has never received any

sort of instruction from the Tzarina or even from a boyar or druzhina. These people still recognise they are subjects of the Ice Queen, but they would be profoundly surprised to learn Katarin expects to be able to tell them what to do. Thus, to understand politics in Kislev, it is necessary to work from the local level upwards and keep in mind the difference between the way the Tzarina says the system works and the way it actually does work.

ATAMANS AND STANITSAS

Throughout most of Kislev, settlements called stanitsas are ruled by atamans, the title given to village chiefs. The ataman discharges nearly all the functions of government, enforcing the law, settling disputes, and setting priorities for the stanitsa. In Ungol stanitsas, the ataman is always supported by at least two other judges, in case the ataman is a member of the groups involved in a court case. Even in those settlements, the ataman judges all cases he is qualified to judge, and the other judges are clearly inferior to him.

The ataman has almost unlimited authority within his settlement. There are few with the power to contradict him, and even those who officially have such power are normally too far away to have any effect on day to day affairs. Despite this, few atamans rule as tyrants. In most cases, the wise women and priests of the Gods provide a counterweight, and in the cases where the ataman is not the leader of the village's rota, the rotamaster also has significant influence. There are a few stanitsas where the ataman is the rotamaster and the only priest; many of these are devoured by the Dark Powers as no one has the ability to challenge the ataman's authority.

The Tzarina claims all atamans are appointed by her and serve at her pleasure. In practice, atamans reach their office through a variety of traditional routes, and the Tzarina simply issues proclamations "appointing" the current ataman. In most Gospodar stanitsas, the ataman's position is hereditary in a noble family, though the details of inheritance vary. Matrilineal inheritance is common, though female atamans (called *atamanka*) are somewhat rarer and make up only about a quarter of the total numbers. Very few Ungol stanitsas have surviving nobility, as the Ungol leaders were eliminated by the victorious Gospodars. In those places, elections in which all adult residents vote are common. Some stanitsas do consistently elect members of a single family, however.

In many border stanitsas, the best war leader becomes the ataman. Such atamans have almost invariably served as rotamaster, but it is quite common for them to abandon that role to concentrate on more strategic matters. A few, particularly among the Gospodars, retain old traditions of having rival candidates duel for the position; most of these duels are to first blood, but rumours persist of isolated settlements that still impose fights to the death. Other contests are also possible; one stanitsa in the east requires candidates for ataman to wrestle a bear, in tribute to Ursun, whilst another, in the southwest, holds a singing contest. Even the villagers there are baffled as to the origin of the custom, but recent extreme good luck (the Spring Driving bypassed them entirely, for example) makes them reluctant to change anything that might offend the spirits.

Katarin knows her proclamations are mere formalities, but for now, that is enough. Once people come to accept the formality as necessary for someone to become an ataman, she will have the power to genuinely control appointments. She is taking advantage of the devastation left by the Chaos Incursion to proactively appoint atamans when there is no immediately



clear traditional candidate. She relies on her advisers to ensure she only appoints people with strong local support, and so far, it is working. She has even been able to remove a couple of notorious cowards from the ataman position.

DRUZHINA

The druzhinas are the lowest rank of formal nobility among the Gospodars. Many atamans hold this rank, as do a significant number of rotamasters. The rank is traditionally hereditary, but the Ice Queen has recently started making individuals druzhina for life in return for great service to the Tzarina or the state or for financial contributions. She has even extended this privilege to some Ungols, which has created some discontent among both Gospodars and other Ungols.

Katarin often uses the rank of druzhina to reward influential individuals who publicly affirm and support her power and authority. These rewards are almost always for life, but she has occasionally granted a druzhina the right to pass the title on to his heirs.

BOYAR

The boyars are the middle-rank nobility, the nobles who hold real power. They are all Gospodars, and the rank is universally hereditary. A few boyars suspect Katarin plans to appoint life boyars, possibly even from among the Ungols, and they do not like the idea at all. They have started spreading the idea that being a boyar requires having the right sort of family pedigree, going back several generations at least. The Tzarina has, so far, avoided explicitly opposing this idea, but she certainly doesn't support it. Instead, when she appoints boyars to positions of greater responsibility, such as leadership of a pulk, she emphasises she is doing it on the basis of ability.

Across most of Kislev, the boyars are the most powerful individuals. They are close enough and have enough followers to tell atamans what to do, and any higher authorities are a very long way away. Most boyars allow atamans a great deal of independence, provided that taxes are paid in full and on time because they have more interesting things to do than deal with the petty disputes of a bunch of peasants.

A recent trend is for boyars to keep a home in one of Kislev's three cities. The Tzarina has encouraged this fashion, as boyars living in a city are subject to her authority in practice and theory, but there are still a substantial number of traditional holdouts across the oblast. Such individuals may be unfashionable and uncultured, but they generally have a firm grip on local power.

Many of these oblast boyars see little need for a central government at all. This feeling is even more common among Ungols of similar status, though they have no formal rank. They do not openly defy the Ice Queen, as they do not need the trouble, but they pay as little attention to her laws as they can get away with. The Tzarina would like to be able to offer the Ungols the rank of boyar in return for an acknowledgement of her authority, but, as noted above, doing so would cause far too many problems with the existing boyars.

THE FROZEN COURT

The heart of Kislev's government lies within the Tzarina's enchanted palace of ice. Its walls, ceilings, and floors are constructed of magically fashioned and maintained blocks of ice. Although the temperatures are far below freezing, Katarin seems completely at ease in such an unwelcoming environment. Tragically for her courtiers and hangers-on, the same cannot be said for them. To ease their discomfort, the Tzarina has decreed formal court dress can include many layers of fur. As well, she does not require most people to sit on chairs carved from ice. However, since her throne is carved from a single block of ice, and as it assumes a different shape each day, the majesty and power she displays are enough to chill the hearts of the most warmly dressed of petitioners.

In the presence of the Tzarina, there are certain forms all recognize and do their best to maintain. Ensuring proper etiquette are the Tzarina's palace guards, dangerous men of peerless skill in arms, and a resilience that rivals even the courageous Dwarfs of the Worlds Edge Mountains. While the rules of court are strictly enforced, Katarin keeps them simple. She wants people to keep them, not have an excuse to punish those who break them.

- No one may turn his back on the Tzarina, which means backing away from her, primarily. She almost always leaves a room immediately after finishing a meeting, so people can leave easily.
- No one may sit in the Tzarina's presence. Katarin has granted personal exceptions to this rule to a few valuable or influential individuals who have trouble standing for long periods. Even they tend to rise when she enters a room, the exceptions being those who no longer have legs.
- No one may stand behind the Tzarina. This rule is interpreted to mean everyone within the room must be within her field of vision and is only strictly enforced while she is seated. She normally stands for a few moments at her throne, to give people time to move into view.
- No one's head may be higher than that of the Tzarina. Fortunately, she is a tall woman, and her throne is always raised on a high platform. People do have to bow when she enters or leaves a room, however.
- Nobody below the rank of boyar may speak directly to the Ice Queen, and boyars may only speak to her when invited to do so. While this is generally true, the Tzarina is known to make exceptions on a whim or in special circumstances.
- Katarin's personal bodyguards are exempt from all of these rules, so they can do their job properly, and they always enter rooms ahead of her, both to check for threats and to warn courtiers that the Tzarina is about to arrive.

The total effect of these simple rules is to keep everyone in court constantly aware of where the Tzarina is and where she is looking. And because she always dresses to have an impact, the rules make it difficult to spend any time at court without subconsciously forming the idea that the Tzarina is the centre of the world.

— MILITARY MATTERS —

The threat from the Ruinous Powers means the military forces of Kislev are a matter of constant concern, even more so than in the Empire. Almost every able-bodied male is serving or has served in some sort of military unit, and many of the women have some experience defending their homes. The varied nature of this service depends on the individual's social rank and cultural background.

WINGED LANCERS

The winged lancers are a Gospodar tradition, and most Gospodar stanitsas support a rota of them, often consisting of nearly all the men of the settlement. These mounted warriors are famed for their elaborately decorated armour, most especially the large, feathered “wings” mounted on their back that make an eerie sound when they charge. The rest of the armour is decorated as richly as the stanitsa can manage—as a matter of pride—and the warriors only don their armour immediately before battle to avoid damaging it in everyday use.

Unsurprisingly, their primary weapon is the lance, but they also use swords for closer fighting, often discarding their lances after an initial charge. While not as manoeuvrable as the Ungol horse archers, they are still a highly mobile force and the mainstay of Kislevite armies. They are, however, not full-time soldiers and often seem more loyal to their home than to the Tzarina. Nevertheless, they fight bravely against Chaos, and so the Ice Queen is more concerned with other political problems.

THE GRYPHON LEGION

The Gryphon Legion can be thought of as an elite group of full-time winged lancers. They draw exclusively from the Gospodar nobility and fletch their wings with Griffon feathers, hence their name. The regiment was founded in 286 (1810 IC) as bodyguards to the Tzar Gospodar IV. In 293 (1817 IC), they were sent on an expedition into the Worlds Edge Mountains where their leader, Vladic Dostov, single-handedly slew a Griffon, using its feathers to decorate his wings. This heroism gave the regiment the status necessary to act independently, and since then, they have spent their time fighting as mercenaries, largely within the Empire. They are, however, sworn to answer the call of the Tzar or Tzarina, and they fought with notable bravery alongside the Ice Queen during the Spring Driving.

Katarin would like to bring the Gryphon Legion more closely under her personal command but is having to work carefully thanks to the regiment's long tradition of independence. On the other hand, the Legion has little political commitment to other nobles or locations in Kislev, which makes it an easier choice than regular rotas of winged lancers. The current commander, Tordimir Lubovasyin, is loyal to the Tzarina but does not want her meddling in his running of the Legion;

he is not convinced she truly understands the needs of his soldiers. He has agreed to inform the Tzarina of all contracts undertaken by the Legion but has resisted asking for permission, even formally. Tordimir has an unimpeachable reputation for valour, and the Legion is fiercely loyal to him, so the Ice Queen treads carefully. She is, however, paying attention to lower-ranked officers in the Legion, looking for someone more accommodating to groom as Tordimir's successor. As yet, she does not seem to have settled on one.

HORSE ARCHERS

The horse archers are supplied by Ungol settlements. They wear little or no armour and are armed with sword and bow. As front-line troops, they are hopeless, but they are extremely manoeuvrable and can shoot more accurately from horseback than anyone else, with the exception of the Elves. As a result, they make excellent backup for winged lancers, harrying the enemy and driving them towards the other troops. They also make superior scouts, a role they greatly enjoy.

Presently, Katarin's main concern is to make sure the horse archers cannot unite into an Ungol army supporting her political opponents. Fortunately, the natural independence of the stanitsas works for her, as no unit of horse archers would sacrifice the security of its own home to support the political ambitions of some other noble. The Tzarina has given druzhina rank to the leaders of particularly notable units, which has secured her some personal loyalty.



KOSSARS AND KOSSARS

The Kislevite kossar career described in *WFRP* is used to describe just about any warrior common in this force.

KOSSARS

The kossars are the standing army of Kislev. They fight on foot with axe and bow and are descended from an Ungol tribe that fought as mercenaries for the Gospodars against the other Ungols. As a result, joining the kossars is seen as a way of renouncing other ties and escaping a difficult past. The officers accept anyone who can pass the fitness tests, and Tzar Boris granted new kossars a full pardon for any crimes committed before they joined. This pardon does not, of course, apply to crimes committed after becoming a kossar.

Contemporary kossars include both Ungols and Gospodars, and they have more than their fair share of criminals, bored younger sons, and general troublemakers. This structure means they have an even worse off-duty reputation than most soldiers. Their boyars do not keep records of the number of kossars executed for their crimes against civilians, as the numbers would be too embarrassing.

On the other hand, they are extremely effective in battle, as they are trained constantly and drilled in battlefield tactics and manoeuvres. This reputation is also widespread, so a settlement facing imminent attack is always glad to see the kossars but also keen to see them leave again.

For a long time, the kossars were more loyal to each other than to the Tzar. However, Tzar Boris liked to lead kossar units in person, and they developed a great deal of respect and admiration for the Red Tzar. Katarin is trying to capitalise on this and has personally addressed and led kossars on a number of occasions. She has maintained Tzar Boris's pardon and, before the Spring Driving, had increased the pay and improved the conditions of the typical kossar. In the aftermath of the Storm of Chaos, she has been unable to maintain that, and since the kossars served bravely, there is some muttering in the ranks.

The Ice Queen would like to restore the kossars' pay and increase the size of the army, introducing elements of cavalry. However,

many nobles, both Gospodar and Ungol, are very suspicious of any moves to increase the size of the standing army and have encouraged winged lancers and horse archers to see any attempt to include cavalry in the standing army as an insult to their prowess. The Tzarina has thus given some thought to hiring a mercenary cavalry unit and gradually converting it to a Kislevite unit as it hires replacement warriors. Ideally, however, she would like the Gryphon Legion to become part of the standing army.

RELIEF COLUMNS

Before the Storm of Chaos, Katarin remained aloof, spending most of her time in the Ice Palace. Very few of her subjects had actually seen her in person. This remoteness was partly personal inclination but also a deliberate attempt to cultivate a somewhat otherworldly image. During the wars, however, she personally led Kislevite forces, lending her mastery of Ice Magic to the struggle against the Ruinous Powers.

In the course of these battles, she found her direct aid inspired direct loyalty, bypassing the local nobility. Even if a boyar fought alongside her, the chekist (secret police) reported that local residents tended to credit the Tzarina with defending them from the Northmen. As a result, she has altered her previous policy.

She has created an army—drawing from the kossars, the Gryphon Legion, and some of the best horse archers in the nation—and in the summer leads it north and east, to regions of Kislev threatened by raiders. There, the horse archers seek out raiding bands, and the Ice Queen leads her army to save the area stanitsas. The Tzarina applies the rules of the court (see **The Frozen Court** on page 24) to any place she goes and makes sure to demonstrate her mastery of arcane power in any battle. This policy is very new but seems to be working. Tordimir does not object to part of the Gryphon Legion serving the Tzarina personally, and the rotas of saved stanitsas have often volunteered to serve with her.

The main problem with this policy is that it forces her to neglect the concerns of central government for weeks at a time. Her chancellor, Militsa Skvortskova, is competent and apparently loyal, but Katarin is still not entirely happy. Rumours say she has hired complete outsiders to check on the loyalty of all her servants, including the chekist.

— RELIGION AND MAGIC —

Gods, spirits, and magic are very important in the lives of Kislevites. The threat from the north means that everyone is well aware of the perils inherent in such power but also of the necessity of having similar power on their side.

THE CULT OF URSUN

Under Katarin's father Boris, the Cult of Ursun enjoyed a renaissance, utterly crushing the threat to its pre-eminence posed by the Cult of Ulric. The cult maintains its position, and the bravery of many of its priests during the Storm of Chaos has not hurt its status in the slightest. The Tzarina is widely

believed to be a sincere devotee of Ursun, as befits the daughter of one chosen directly by the God as high priest.

However, her relationship with the cult is complicated by the fact she is only the daughter of the high priest and not high priestess herself. The cult does not recognise her as a spiritual leader, though it is grateful for her support and certainly does not promote rebellion against or resistance to the Tzarina.

Politically, chief priests of Ursun have a great deal of influence locally, especially given the resurgence in the cult's influence, but on a national level, the cult has no organisation and, thus, no policies. Katarin's devotion appears to be genuine, and she

has been subtly encouraging the cult to stay out of politics. For now, there are no problems, but if a new high priest were to arise, things could change rapidly.

THE CULT OF DAZH

The Cult of Dazh has more potential political influence, thanks to its tighter organisation, but under Watcher Ydeski it does not use this influence for much of importance, concentrating mainly on the enforcement of minor commands of the God. Katarin pays homage to Dazh and is known to trust her personal attendant, Fredrek Solzeyn. Indeed, she has more contact with him than with any priest of Ursun.

This preference has led some to suspect she has plans for the Cult of Dazh and may be grooming Solzeyn to be the next head of the Kislev temple. Certainly, some young priests have started preaching that the Tzarina is the chosen agent of Dazh, appointed to defend his holy fires against outside threats, and no one has moved to stop them. Some suggest this tolerance can only mean that higher authorities in the cult want to encourage the spread of such beliefs.

While Watcher Ydeski is too bound up in his own paranoia and petty crusades to care, there are priests in distant regions of Kislev who have said that they do not believe an ice witch can be the chosen of the God of fire. Most are careful to emphasise they believe the Tzarina is the rightful ruler of Kislev; those who do not are arrested and tortured until they do so. If, however, the Ice Queen does try to impose a new doctrine on the cult, serious trouble could ensue.

THE ICE WITCHES

One of the most famed and feared political groups in Kislev is the ice witches. Women of great magical power, of whom Tzarina is their most famous member, they command the very elements and bring to bear the might of the land in defence of their great nation. They are a strange breed, being physically and spiritually linked to the seasons, growing weaker in the summer and stronger in the winter.

The ice witches are firmly on the Tzarina's side. She is currently the most powerful ice witch in Kislev, and some say she is a reincarnation of Miska, the first ice witch and Tzarina of the early Gospodars. Katarin, in turn, favours the ice witches, granting them legal privileges similar to those extended to the nobility.

The main weakness of the ice witches, from a political perspective, is that they have very little to do with the common people of Kislev, remaining aloof while studying their magic. The level of power they bring to the Tzarina's service is highly valuable, but they do not bring any other supporters with them. Individual ice witches who could win the order a place in the affections of the people would be greatly favoured by the Tzarina.

WISE WOMEN

The Tzarina is widely believed to dislike the wise women (also known as hags). To begin with, they are strongly associated



with the Ungols, and Katarin is the heir of everything the Gospodars stand for. Further, the wise women seem utterly indifferent to the Ice Queen's authority and have even claimed not to be subject to her laws and commands. While the Tzarina does not accept that, she and her agents have occasionally had to concede to specific demands or risk riot and rebellion in the oblast.

It is certainly true that the wise women have no legal privileges, and people who have killed hags have been allowed the defence that they were destroying a servant of the Dark Powers. However, the Tzarina has not taken any direct actions against them yet, possibly for fear that doing so would alienate the Ungols and possibly out of fear of their magic. On the other side, very few wise women, and none of the influential ones, have counselled outright rebellion or even resistance. Rather, they suggest doing as the Tzarina requires, at least as long as the spirits say no differently.

Most knowledgeable observers agree the Tzarina would prefer to have the wise women on her side and is looking for ways to convert them. Individual wise women willing to openly support the Tzarina and advise others to do the same would receive significant patronage. The few who have done so, however, have lost their status among the wise women in return, and so, the promise of patronage has not been effective.

At present, the wise women do not have a single strong leader; a number of hag mothers share the influence. If that were to change, the Tzarina might come to see them as more of a threat. Of course, if a potential leader were a supporter of the Tzarina, the Ice Queen would be very likely to support her.

— OTHER ELEMENTS —

There are two other important factors in Kislevite politics, though neither has nationwide influence at present. The first is the guilds of Erengard, and the second is Nyvena, an Ungol warrior.

GUILDS OF ERENGRAD

The merchants of Erengard formed into guilds some time ago and spent a long time trying to persuade the Tzar to recognise them and grant them privileges. Tzar Boris never did, as he had little time for merchants. Katarin, however, saw their potential as a power bloc that was not yet aligned to any nobles.

She granted them many of the privileges they wanted, as well as the title of druzhina to some of the guild masters, in return for direct service and loyalty to the Tzarina. The most onerous condition—and one some guild members wanted to reject—was the Tzarina's demand she be allowed to appoint the guild masters. In the end, however, the privileges in trade, legal rights to govern trading conditions, and personal honours for the current guild masters (all of whom she promised to confirm in their positions) won out.

The Tzarina has thus far kept her promises to the guilds, and through her efforts, they have greatly expanded their power within Erengard. This said, in appointing the two guild masters, she went to great lengths to select men with considerable support within the guild, thus ensuring she made popular choices while also befriending some of the most influential members within Erengard's guilds. As one would expect from such shrewd plotting, the guilds have become quite loyal to Katarin, especially since their ascent has weakened the traditional nobility of Erengard. As these nobles had a reputation of fierce independence, their waning influence sees their former power falling into the

hands who support the distant monarch. The boyars of the city are certainly not happy, but as yet, few talk of rebellion.

NYVENA

Nyvena is an Ungol warrior from the western reaches of the oblast. He leads a band of mounted warriors, including some lancers (not winged) and horse archers, and he has won many notable victories over the forces of Chaos. He rose to prominence during the Storm of Chaos and has continued his battle against the Ruinous Powers ever since. A valorous warrior in his own right, he is also a skilled leader of men, and his reputation stands high. The Tzarina offered him the rank of druzhina, but he turned it down, saying it was a Gospodar rank, and he was of the Ungol.

The problem with Nyvena is that he is not disloyal; he answered the Tzarina's call when the Spring Driving came down, and he has never defied her agents. On the other hand, he clearly does not see all his authority as springing from the Tzarina's pleasure, and neither does anyone else. Thus, he is a possible centre for discontent and rebellion. Certain elements of the chekist have urged he be assassinated, but the Tzarina is said to be reluctant to do so before he becomes a real threat. At the moment, he is a great support to the defence of the oblast, and she would be reluctant to lose that, especially if there were any chance of people finding out she was behind it.

There are two possibilities that could make the issue more serious. The first is that a leader of the wise women might throw her weight behind Nyvena as leader of the Ungols. The second is that Ursun might choose him as high priest. Nyvena is a devout follower of the Bear God, and a number of priests who have met him believe he shows signs of special blessing. If either of these events were to come to pass, Nyvena would be too powerful for the Tzarina to ignore.



LAW IN KISLEV

“Law and justice are essential to any civilised society. Lawyers... not so much.”

—BORIS KHANDNASKY,
PRAAG BURGHER AND MAGISTRATE



Citizens of the Empire sometimes imagine Kislev as a lawless, barbarian waste, which is far from the truth. It is true that Kislev's laws tend to be simpler and enforced in a

system involving fewer lawyers than those of the Empire. They can also be very different, something that has landed more than one arrogant visitor from the Empire in a great deal of trouble.

— THE TZARINA AND THE LAW —

As part of her drive to centralise authority, Tzarina Katarin declared she is the sole source of law and justice. Thus, any attempt to make, or even enforce, laws is a criminal act, unless the person in question has been authorised to do so by the Tzarina or by her representatives. She has instructed all her agents to take this law very seriously, and so they do.

The result is that the penalties for unauthorised law enforcement are much more severe, where possible, than the penalties for the crimes involved. A group of adventurers who killed a group of bandits because they were bandits would face death by slow freezing for challenging the Tzarina's authority. On the other hand, a brawler who kills his opponent may be spared any further punishment if his victim was unpopular and if he took some wounds in the fight. Thus, cunning adventurers know to claim to have fought over an insult or a bet and, in the resulting brawl, killed a group of people who happened to be the bandits plaguing the village.

Of course, everyone knows the truth behind the ruse, but the Tzarina recognises that the surface form is what matters, for now. If no one claims to be enforcing the law without her authority, then, very soon, she really will have a monopoly on that authority.

To support this strategy, the Tzarina designated all the existing judges, magistrates, and city watches as her agents. Since

the Storm of Chaos, she has stopped issuing retrospective authorisation, but she has yet to turn down a request backed by the local rulers or community. Her closest advisers are now looking for a suitable location in which she can appoint someone without community support. There is a long way to go before the Tzarina will actually have control over the full system of law and justice, but neither she nor her counsellors plan to waste any time getting there.

CHAOS AND THE LAW

It is not illegal to be a Mutant or a servant of the Ruinous Powers in Kislev. On the other hand, it is also not illegal to kill Mutants, Beastmen, or other creatures touched by corruption. So, anyone who finds a nest of evil is free to wipe it out without facing any legal penalties, whether for murder or for enforcing the law without the Tzarina's permission.

It was once illegal, a capital offence, to work with the servants of Chaos, but Katarin changed the laws shortly after assuming the throne. Since no one had ever really bothered with trials, she presented it as simply recognising the actual situation, and almost everyone accepted that. The enthusiastic pursuit of Mutants and cultists by Katarin and her associates spoiled any notions she might be providing legal protection for such

creatures; indeed, she argued that she was, instead, providing protection for those who hunted them.

In principle, an adventurer could be tried for murder after killing a cultist and executed if he could not prove his accusations. In reality, such a thing is only likely to happen if the adventurer is an outsider (from the Empire, for example), and the cultist is a member of the local community. As a result,

foreigners need to be careful, but Kislevite witch hunters have nearly free rein; very few people are willing to stand up for an accused—and dead—servant of the Ruinous Powers.

This situation is, of course, abused in some cases. But the chekist catch some of the worst offenders, and the general feeling is that there are fewer innocent deaths this way than if the cultists were granted the chance to manipulate judges in a trial.

— UNGOL LAW —

In some areas of Kislev, generally remote parts of the oblast, Ungol law still applies. Tzar Boris made this concession, which won him the support of a large number of Ungol warriors, but Katarin would like to undo it. She would prefer Gospodar law—with her at the head—to apply everywhere. However, she has to respect the edicts of her father, and so she works within Ungol law in those areas. The inhabitants of any place can petition for their home to be transferred to Gospodar law, and Katarin grants any such petition that has substantial support. Changes in the other direction are not permitted.

GROUP RESPONSIBILITY

The fundamental concept of Ungol law is that a group is responsible for the actions of all its members. If a member of a group commits a crime, any member of the group may be punished for that crime.

The smallest such group is the family, defined as all the blood descendants of a living woman and the husbands of any married women in that bloodline. Men change families when they get married. Families split into groups defined by blood descendants of a matriarch's daughters when she dies. Ungol law has nothing to say about actions taken within a family, and the elders discipline as they see fit. In most cases, however, the harsh environment ensures families pull together. It is normal for a family to travel together or live in the same place. And while individual members may leave, it is unheard of for a family to be split between two stanitsas.

Above the families come the clans and tribes, as well as the stanitsas. Both clans and tribes were originally defined by blood links, but over the centuries, they have simply become traditional groupings. It is unusual, but not unheard of, for a family to change clan or tribe, though an individual woman must belong to the clan and tribe chosen by her family. It is not uncommon for men, on marriage, to change both clan and tribe as well as family. Stanitsas are places of residence, typically villages, and often host a number of families and even different clans or tribes.

If a crime is committed against an individual, the penalty can be levied on any individual who shares membership with the criminal in a group to which the victim does not belong. Thus, if both criminal and victim are in the same family, there is no possible group to take the penalty. If they are in different families within the same clan, a member of the criminal's family must be punished. If they are in different clans, anyone in the same clan may be taken.

The law states that the actual criminal is the preferred target of punishment, and the judge grants the criminal's group a period of time to produce the malefactor for punishment. This deadline is normally at least a week, occasionally as long as a year; the length depends in large part on how important the criminal's group is.

Gospodars are, for the purposes of Ungol law, considered to be one family. That means any crime committed by a Gospodar against an Ungol may be avenged on any other Gospodar. This part of Ungol law is something Katarin thoroughly dislikes. In response, she has established a group of Gospodars who track down the real criminal and take the punishment if they fail. These *stelniks*, as they are called, are often convicted criminals given a chance to work off their penalty. They often follow the bounty hunter career.

Kislevites are considered to be a single group, and all foreigners are treated as a single family. This generalisation has led to an innocent Tilean merchant being executed for a murder committed by a mercenary from Stirland, and Katarin would like to find some foreign volunteers to play the same role as the *stelniks*. So far, however, they have been in short supply, particularly as judges have been known to give foreigners only until sunset to find the true criminal.

UNGOL COURTS

Ungol law courts consist of a single judge who listens to the evidence, asks questions as he wishes, and then makes a decision. There is no appeal. The only rule is that the judge must not belong to the same group as either the victim or the accused. Thus, a judge between two families must be from a third family, which means that a judge between Gospodar and Ungol must be a foreigner, though the Ungol tribes have agreed the Tzarina in person can also serve as judge in such a case. When judging between a Kislevite and a foreigner, there is no neutral group, so any judge can serve. As a result, foreigners rarely win their cases.

Although the formal requirements are simple, most judges are chosen based on their experience and reputation for fairness. In principle, the two parties to a case can choose anyone qualified whom they agree on, and in the past, things worked that way. Now the Tzarina requires any judge have her approval, so groups choose judges in advance and send the names to the court in Kislev for official recognition. Such methods are often unwieldy and take up far too much of the Tzarina's time, so she delegates the minor appointments to her representatives—usually ice witches. Most judges are elected, though some areas have different customs, such as always appointing the oldest living

man or someone who was crippled fighting against raiders from the north. In almost every case, the ataman of a stanitsa is also a judge, though he is never the only judge present.

Foreign judges are chosen based on their actions, and their names are sent to Kislev in the normal way. Witch hunters from the Empire are chosen quite frequently, as they often impress the Ungols with their commitment to hunting down foul cultists. They also have no objection to handing out harsh sentences and are willing to travel the oblast to reach the cases. Katarin has recently refused an application to appoint a particular witch hunter as a judge, and he proved to be a secret cultist of the Plague Lord, so this has strengthened her hand somewhat.

The judge decides what evidence to hear, and the verdict is at his sole discretion, as is the penalty. For the most part, this process works well enough and provides something close to justice quickly enough to allow life to continue on the unforgiving steppes. If a judge becomes corrupt—or worse, seduced by the Ruinous Powers—it can be disastrous.

UNGOL LAWS

Ungol law is not written down anywhere authoritative. Rather, it is remembered by the judges and the wise women and applied according to common sense. It is unwise to argue the details of the definition of a crime in an Ungol court.

The laws contain the normal kinds of prohibitions against theft and violence but also have a number of provisions based on life on the steppes.

Refusing hospitality is a serious offence, only a little below murder. Some allowance is made for the circumstances, but turning someone away from your camp is always a criminal matter. The basic rule is that more permanent settlements must offer hospitality and that, if both groups are equally nomadic, the responsibility falls on the larger.

Abusing hospitality is an even more serious offence than murder, and some judges argue that it is the most serious offence possible. It is one of the few cases in which a judge might order innocent members of the criminal's group to be punished as well. However, the most important mark of gravity is that the Ungol put a lot of effort into finding and punishing those who commit this crime, in some cases spending years on the hunt. For example, one Tilean follower of Ranald was finally slain by a half dozen travel-worn Ungol warriors on the streets of Sartosa.

Hospitality does not, of course, extend to followers of the Ruinous Powers, and refusing hospitality to them or abusing their trust is perfectly legal.

UNGOL PUNISHMENTS

The Ungol do not use fines as punishments, though they may require compensation to be paid to victims. Similarly, they do not use imprisonment as a punishment, but criminals may be held while they await trial. Suspects are normally held by their own family, rather than by the accusers, in order to ensure the right person suffers if the decision goes against them.



As a result, Ungol punishments are almost entirely corporal. Flogging and branding are popular, and the number of lashes or the size of the brand depends on the nature of the crime. Crippling is only employed when a whole group is held to bear some responsibility for a crime, as a crippled member becomes a burden on the group. Indeed, it is not uncommon for a crippled criminal to be killed by his family, an action outside Ungol law. However, minor mutilations, which do not affect a person's ability to survive, are used in much the same way as brands. Finally, capital punishment is common. The following specific punishments are popular in Ungol areas, but most judges have their own favourites.

Arrows

The criminal is tied to a post, and archers shoot arrows at him. The number of arrows, and the distance between the archer and the post, are determined by the judge. This punishment can be anything from a death penalty to a light slap on the wrist. In almost all cases, the victim is allowed to nominate an archer. The Ballad of Isukin and Noga includes a famous scene in which Noga shoots twenty arrows at Isukin—who was convicted of betraying Noga—from five paces and misses every time. In the ballad, this act is the start of an alliance that overthrows a horde of Kurgan. Satirical versions in which Isukin kills Noga as soon as he is untied are almost more popular than the original ballad.

The Glove

A metal glove that opens like a clam shell is heated until it glows and then is closed on the criminal's hand. It is left closed for a number of heartbeats depending on the severity of the crime and then removed. The victim takes 1d10 damage plus 1 damage per heartbeat. Ulric's Fury does not apply, and critical injuries only apply to the hand in question.

The Helm

A closed helmet is heated until it glows and then is forced onto the criminal's head. This punishment is a form of execution, and if the judge is feeling merciful, the helmet is riveted to the base of the skull with a long spike, causing near-instant death and sparing the criminal considerable pain.

Horse Running

The criminal is tied to a rope, which is tied to the saddle of a horse. The horse is then set into motion. Many variations of this punishment exist, allowing it to be tuned to the crime. The length of the horse's run can be controlled, as can its speed. Similarly, the length of the rope and the means by which it is fastened to the criminal make a difference. A rope tied around the waist allows the criminal to run as fast as he can. One tied around the wrists makes him more likely to fall, while one tied around the ankles guarantees that he will be dragged. Further, the horse might be ridden or simply driven into a gallop out onto the oblast. Leaving the horse to its own devices means the final level of the penalty is in the hands of the Gods, something appealing to some judges.

Spirits' Mercy

The criminal is driven out into the oblast, branded on his face with a mark indicating that it is a legal duty to deny him hospitality. This act is basically a death sentence, and in most cases, the criminal is driven out naked and with no possessions, which guarantees a swift death. However, in some cases, the criminal is allowed full equipment, particularly if his family is very popular or if the judge feels he was justified in his actions. It is still essentially a death sentence, but a few people manage to survive alone on the steppes. Suren the Dead is a legendary example; certainly, his exploits in support of his family and against the raiders from the north have been exaggerated in the telling.

— GOSPODAR LAW —

Gospodar law is more like that of the Empire and has been strongly influenced by it. Some Kislevites feel there has been too much influence and long for a return to the good old days of proper Gospodar justice. The Tzarina, however, likes the centralised system, so no change is likely any time soon.

The biggest difference from Ungol law is that the responsibility for a crime rests solely with the criminal; Gospodar courts cannot flog someone just because his cousin is a thief.

Nearly as significant is the fact that Gospodar law is written and defined by the wording of the Tzarina's proclamations. The judges must make decisions in accordance with this written law and, thus, must study it before they can be entrusted with a court. Although the written law exists, it is simple compared to the laws of the Empire and leaves a lot of room for judicial interpretation.

FEUD

Gospodar law permits feuds between families, possibly under the influence of Ungol law. The law allows an individual, or an

individual's family, to take revenge for an injury suffered. The person receiving the injury need not be the guilty party. It is, of course, also permissible to take revenge for the injury inflicted in revenge.

The legal mechanism to bring feuds under control is the law that it is not permissible to take revenge for a reasonable injury inflicted as punishment for a crime recognised in a court of law. If the punishment is unreasonable, however, this rule does not apply. Taking revenge for a reasonable punishment is, however, regarded more seriously than inflicting the original injury.

The Tzarina would dearly like to abolish the law on feuds, as it undermines her authority. However, too many nobles still see it as essential to their dealings with each other, and she is not strong enough to force them to give up their feuds. She prefers the current situation to having the nobility defy her authority, so it remains, for now.

The law that allows courts to bring feuds to an end is having an effect, as slightly weaker parties are tending to bring issues to court rather than continue the feud on their own. The

Tzarina has instructed her agents, particularly the chekist, to be particularly vigilant about groups who do not respect the decisions of the courts.

GOSPODAR COURTS

Gospodar courts are run by professional or semi-professional appointees of the Tzarina. In remote areas, the ataman of the settlement almost invariably holds this position, but in the cities, the magistrates are increasingly becoming a professional group separate from the nobility. Katarin encourages this trend, and a few of the powerful nobles can see the threat it poses to their power. They do not, however, typically want to take on such a dull job, which means that Katarin's plan is proceeding well.

Most courts have a single judge, though those set up to judge boyars or higher members of the nobility have three judges who must agree unanimously in order to convict. Kislev and Erengard each have a single permanent court for the nobility, while Praag has two, a reminder of the unrest among the northern boyars.

The judge decides who speaks, what other evidence can be admitted, and whether the accused is guilty. There is no appeal, but a judge who issues a decision that contradicts the law can be tried for treason. Even if the judge is found to have broken the law, the judgement against the person convicted still stands.

The penalty is determined by the victim or the victim's family. The law sets out a list of permissible penalties, but they are not distinguished by offence. A victim can choose to have a verbal insult punished by slowly torturing the criminal to death, and that penalty is enforced. The main check on this is the possibility of a feud, as discussed above. Of course, when the victim is powerful and the criminal is not, it's not really an issue; boyars often inflict draconian penalties on peasants.

Outside the settlements, law is enforced by "oblast justices." These judges are as much police as judge, and they bear many resemblances to the bounty hunters of the Empire. Unlike city judges, they are also permitted to impose penalties, though some take pride in dragging criminals before the victims for punishment. If a settlement is without a judge, which is rare, or has a complaint against the ataman, which is more common, its members may appeal to the oblast justices.

The need for oblast justices is assessed on the apparent level of crime in a region—meaning, if things appear to be calm, the residents are reluctant to stir things up too much by undertaking detailed investigations. On the other hand, if there is an obvious problem, many try to scare it back into the shadows, for tales of close links between oblast justices and local crime syndicates are common. The chekist spend some of their time looking for such corruption.

GOSPODAR LAWYERS

People with legal training may not speak in court, even in their own defence, unless they have also been appointed as judges by the Tzarina. This provision has greatly restricted the number of lawyers found in Kislev but has not eliminated them entirely. They provide pre-trial consultation services and advice on whether a course of action is legal.



Much of their advice consists of suggestions of how to play to the self-importance of the judges, but they can also bring laws to the court's attention.

Some people think that even this small amount of interference introduces too much delay and pointless quibbling into the judicial system, and influential groups of nobles are campaigning for the study of law to be made illegal outside designated schools for training judges. The main opposition to this comes from people concerned about the risk of making it illegal to read the Tzarina's proclamations. Katarin has yet to take a public position on this matter, and many suspect she sees it as a trivial distraction.

GOSPODAR LAWS

Gospodar laws naturally have the standard sorts of laws against theft and violence. But the laws also contain a number that are more specific to the land of Kislev.

It is illegal for adult males to not have, maintain, and practise with appropriate weapons. For most of the country, this law is irrelevant, as there are far more pressing reasons to be ready to fight. However, in the cities, there are some who want to get around the law, and the judges and chekist worry about the possibility of armed vagabonds rioting when they realize they can't be stopped. Before the Storm of Chaos, the pressure to change the law was strong, but the reminder of just how much of a threat the raiders from the north are has undermined this position for now. It is important to note women are permitted to wield weapons; it is merely not a legal obligation for them.

The importance of Ursun to the culture is reflected in the laws. Most notably, it is illegal to kill a hibernating bear, and

there is a general consensus that the most serious penalties are appropriate for such an offence.

A number of laws concern the proper respect being shown to the nobility—and especially to the Tzarina. It is a criminal offence to criticise the Tzarina in any way or to undermine respect for her rule. This law is enforced harshly against boyars, atamans, and others in positions of authority but much more loosely against ordinary citizens. This law was decreed by the Tzarina directly; any sign of dissent or disloyalty among the people with the power to disturb her rule must be wiped out immediately, but low-level murmurings and jokes among the ordinary people can be tolerated. Of course, serious suggestions that the Tzarina should be replaced are dealt with harshly no matter what the rank of the offender.

The laws for the nobility are enforced more strictly against the ordinary people. Criticism is not illegal but disrespect is. Peasants are required to give way to nobles, to always speak politely to nobles, and to change their actions if what they are doing is inconvenient for a noble. Some boyars press cases for violations of these rules with great vigour, particularly in the cities. The country nobility tend to be a little more tolerant, as there are fewer people to back them up if the peasants come to hate them.

One result of the enforcement of these laws is that the common people tend to see the Tzarina as far more sympathetic towards them than she is toward the lower nobility. While a petty noble might drag a shopkeeper to court for not bowing low enough, the Tzarina overlooks drunken conversations about taxes being too high, even when the chekist is present. This reason is why the common folk have great affection for the Tzarina, and while Katarin may not have planned for this consequence, she is certainly taking steps to maintain it.

Gospodar law does not contain any requirements to offer hospitality, but it does contain laws punishing abuse of hospitality. These laws state a host should be treated as a member of the nobility by his guests. As a result, very few people in the cities ask for hospitality from people they are not already friendly with. Out on the oblast, customs of hospitality are very strong, and abuse, while rare, is punished with the full force of the law.

— THE CHEKIST —

The chekist are the Tzarina's secret police. Their existence is not secret, and they have a lot of open members, but they also have spies searching for signs of corruption and opposition to Katarin's rule.

The chekist are—by decree of the Tzarina—infallible in their interpretation of the law. Whatever they say is the law, is the law, and the penalties they select are always appropriate to the crime in question. They never convict the wrong people, and while they may arrest and torture people who prove to be innocent, that is no fault of the chekist.

The most important qualification for becoming a chekist is absolute loyalty to the Tzarina, which is closely followed by competence. Katarin does not want to institute a reign of terror; she just wants to be able to deal with her enemies quickly and efficiently. Chekist who display excessive cruelty and incompetence are arrested by their superiors and soon

GOSPODAR PUNISHMENTS

As noted earlier, under Gospodar law, any legal punishment may be meted out for any crime at the victim's discretion under the feud provision. Punishments tend to be harsh, but very few victims go against the social sense of what is reasonable, and those who do are often ostracised, even if they are not targeted by a feud. Of course, nobles feel that harsh punishments are entirely appropriate when a peasant assaults a noble, and they do not care if peasants want to ostracise them.

Fines, of any amount, are a permitted punishment. Half of the fine goes to the court—and thus to the Tzarina—while half is kept by the victim. Fines of a bit more than twice the cost of any damage are universally recognised as reasonable, and victims of theft who restrict themselves to such punishments can get a reputation for justice and mercy even as they vigorously pursue anyone who wrongs them. It is common for victims to require a fine in addition to any other punishment.

Flogging, up to one hundred strokes with implements ranging from a light cane to heavy leather straps loaded with weights and spikes, is another popular penalty. The most popular form of legal discussion in taverns is of the appropriate level of flogging for hypothetical offences.

Branding is not permitted under Gospodar law. It used to be, but it was abolished after a series of petty thieves were branded "rapist" or "cultist of the north."

Mutilation is generally only applied in cases of wounding, where it is common for the same injury to be inflicted on the criminal. Nobles can often get away with imposing injuries that correspond to damage done to their property. An urchin who broke the windows of a noble's house might be blinded, for example.

The death penalty is also available but rarely used by the common folk for anything short of rape or murder. Nobles use it more loosely and commonly impose it for the death of valued animals.

become even more closely acquainted with the furnishings of the interrogation rooms. The simply incompetent generally die in the course of their duty, without any assistance from their superiors.

Chekist who are sadistic but competent pose the biggest problem. In most cases, they are rotated around the country, so that no single area suffers too much from their depredations. Often, they are assigned to deal with very dangerous threats because the hierarchy would rather lose a difficult chekist than one who fits in perfectly.

The chekist carry an elaborate, minted medallion identifying their position and show it if required to prove who they are. They wear black when on duty but have no formal uniform beyond that, making it relatively easy to pose as a member of the secret police. The chekist deal with anyone who pretends to be one of them, which is another task frequently assigned to those who are both sadistic and competent.

RELIGION AND CUSTOM

*"The Gods are great, but only a fool
would trust them with his life."*

—BORYA BEARFINDER,
PRIEST OF URSUN



A Sigmarite scholar once described Kislev as a land with too little faith and too much superstition. Behind the Empire prejudice, there is truth in this. There are many agents of the forest and the sky, and all of them must be respected, whether God or spirit. Respect is the heart of Kislevite religion. Their Gods are much like their winters: indifferent and often arbitrary, but if they are respected, they may spare your life—if only for another day.

URSUN

God of Bears

Ursun is the God of Bears, also known as Father of Bears, or Father Bear. His worship was first introduced by the Gospodars, but bears are such a major part of Kislevite life that the religion was absorbed almost instantly. Bears continue to be a vital part of society to this day, and the religion is now inseparable from the Kislevite culture. Worship of Ursun is not a state religion as the worship of Sigmar in the Empire is, but the fate of Kislev is linked in many minds to the fortunes and favour of Father Bear.

Ursun is usually depicted as a giant, brown, cave bear, sometimes wearing a gold crown. He also often has golden teeth or golden claws, which indicate not only that Ursun is king of the beasts but the value of bears as well. On the oblast, a killed bear will provide great wealth to an entire stanitsa.

Occasionally, Ursun is depicted as a large, burly man with grey streaks in his wild hair. He wears a loincloth and carries nothing but a spear. As a wild God, Ursun is not worshipped in temples but in outdoor shrines or disused bear caves. In the cities, great

gardens of pine trees, bushes, and rocks serve as a place of worship, the shrine hidden in a cave or cleft in the centre. The greatest of these gardens sits near the Bokhar Palace in Kislev.

SYMBOL

Besides a depiction of a bear, Ursun is symbolised by a bear claw, worn around the neck. The truly devout will wear a gold-plated claw. It is also reverent to dress in a bearskin but only if the wearer kills the bear. Similarly, some wear an entire bear paw or fix a skull to their helmet or belt but, again, only if they killed the bear in question. It is not disrespectful to wear a bearskin that was killed by another, as long as it is not done ostentatiously or ceremonially. Many keep warm through the long winters thanks to a bearskin shirt, without any insult to the God.

AREA OF WORSHIP

Despite his wild nature, Ursun is as popular in the cities as he is in the oblast. This status is mostly because the previous Tzar was also the high priest of the Cult of Ursun, the first to claim that title in over four hundred years. During the Great War against Chaos, the Cult of Ursun was scattered to the winds. The Bear God was still revered, but with so many cities and towns devastated, the central cult vanished. When Tzar Boris had his encounter with Urskin the Great Bear, he knew he was chosen by Ursun, took the God's name as his, and brought the faith back to Kislev.

His daughter, Katarin, did not follow in the role of high priest but is no less dutiful to Father Bear. Thanks to the interest of the royal family, worship of Ursun has been taken up feverishly by the druzhinas and wealthy folk of the cities, and there is

hardly a street in Erengard or Kislev that lacks some reminder of the bear God.

Ursun is no less ubiquitous in the oblast. That the bear is both a popular folk figure and a co-habiting species means every stanitsa includes someone who reveres Father Bear first and foremost. Meanwhile, anyone who benefits from a bear kill or just leaves the forest without becoming food for bears will thank Ursun for it. In the wild north, bears can be a constant threat, and every man is aware he owes his life to the forbearance of Ursun, as much as to his own strength and luck.

TEMPERAMENT

Father Bear is a fierce, patriarchal figure. He is unyielding and unforgiving when it comes to his strictures but also demands his followers fend for themselves. Ursun is a God of bears first, then men. He permits the hunting of his children out of compassion for humanity, under the strict condition it is done respectfully and with the awareness that it is a privilege, not a right.

Ursun is aloof but not unfeeling—he grants prayers to the faithful, and common folk and priests alike may attract his attention by nailing a fish to their door. Ursun highly favours those who demonstrate the strength and courage of his bear-kin, however. A warrior fighting furiously in battle will win Ursun's favour over a priest praying fervently at a shrine. Those who are cowardly, weak, or who hunt in a disrespectful fashion receive no blessings and may be punished. Such rebuke might mean the stanitsa has no successful bear hunts that year, or it may involve a great bear charging into town and rending the transgressors limb from limb. Ursun is a wild God: inconsistent in his justice and brutal in his anger.



In his favour of deeds over words, Ursun is akin to Ulric.

The followers of both religions get along well, though there is rivalry between them. Each is keen to prove their God is the strongest, and they are more blessed as a result. This rivalry is mostly friendly, contested with things such as wrestling matches or competitive hunts. Sometimes—particularly when a lot of drinking has been involved—the rivalry can become violent but is rarely more serious than a bar brawl.

Ursun's relative indifference to Humans and veneration of nature also makes him much like Taal, and the two religions share more than just a border at the Talabec. Followers of Taal wonder why the Ursunites choose one animal over all the others, while the servants of Father Bear wonder how anyone could fail to see the bear's obvious superiority, though in other respects, their cults have little difference and blend together easily. Taal worship is often found side by side with that of Ursun, particularly in the west.

STRICTURES

- Never hunt a bear in winter—let him sleep as he lets you sleep.
- Wake the bear in the spring, and feed him well before his winter rest.
- Bears must only be killed by the strength of your hand or the flight of an arrow.
- Only display the hide, claw, tooth, or skull of a bear you have killed yourself.
- Shun the comforts of indoor life whenever possible. In particular, all ablutions and bathing must be done outdoors.
- Eat fish at least once a week, as the bear does. Never eat fish and another meat on the same day, as this is wasteful.

URSUN'S CULT

The Cult of Ursun is strong but far less organised than the cults of the Empire Gods. Each town and stanitsa with more than one follower of Ursun will have a chief priest (sometimes called a speaker), typically the strongest or largest among them. The chief priest speaks for all his followers and for the will of Ursun, letting his village and fellow worshippers know what the bear God wishes. He is also responsible for leading hunts, punishing those who break the strictures, and overseeing the initiation of new members and new priests. Those wishing to take the role of priest must go into the wilderness alone with only bow and knife and bring back a tamed bear. While rarely fatal, it can take years for an aspirant to find a suitable animal.

The role of chief priest is held until death, and it is considered bad luck for a chief priest to die outside of a battle or a hunt. "The bear does not die sleeping," is the adage used. Upon the death of a chief priest, the honour passes to the strongest warrior amongst the remaining priests.

At times, Ursun is known to choose a great high priest, who is the chief priest of all of Kislev. Ursun speaks to him about

the fate of the whole land and the path of its people. High priests are found through signs and portents—perhaps a child born with a bear-shaped birthmark may be destined for such a role; a chief priest who slays a terrible ice bear may be called by Ursun to be his voice. The high priest before Boris Ursus, the shaman Hagrim Bear-Brother, was lost in the snow as a youngling and found alive the next spring in the care of a mother bear. And the tale of the choosing of Tzar Bokhar is well known.

Like the chief priests, the high priest is responsible for ensuring all the people of the land show proper respect to Father Bear. When the high priest is close to death, he is often given a vision of the next high priest, allowing the title to be passed on. Other times, the position lays vacant until Ursun needs such a servant again. Many believe a high priest rises when Kislev is in great need, and Ursun must prepare his followers against invasion or other great trial. Yet Tzar Boris died before the Storm of Chaos broke. Some wonder if his early death means Ursun's favour has abandoned them. Others wonder if the Storm will all-too-soon blow back again and if they'll have time to scan the portents for the next high priest.

Holy Orders

With its new prominence under Tzar Boris, the cult gained two new orders. The first is a warrior group known as the Circle of the Bear. Membership in its prestigious ranks is reserved only for winged lancers who demonstrate great courage and great devotion to Ursun. The Circle swears total obedience to Father Bear, but when lacking such divine guidance, they take orders directly from the Tzarina.

Boris also ordained a group known as the Keepers of the Hunt. This loose connection of warriors and woodsmen ensure all bear hunts around the capital are performed according to Ursun's strictures. However, their authority is limited, and with the Tzar gone, their numbers are dwindling.

Within the Keepers of the Hunt is a sub-cult called the True Keepers, and with the death of the Tzar, their zeal for their holy mission has only increased. They see noblemen and druzhinas using dogs, traps, and guns, sleeping bears being killed, whole carcasses left to rot in the snow, and nobody stopping it. They believe the only way to end such atrocities is with blood and have begun hunting down and murdering the perpetrators, using the same techniques the offenders used to hunt bears. So far, only a few nobles have failed to return from their hunts, but very soon, this trouble will boil over.

Cult Skills and Talents

Initiates of Ursun begin with the Animal Training Skill in addition to their normal career skills. Priests of Father Bear may, at their option, learn the following skills and talents as part of their careers: Follow Trail, Outdoor Survival, and Very Strong.

Prominent Figures

The most important figure in the cult is of course Tzar Boris. He is seen as a saviour of the faith, restoring it in the hearts

RELIGIOUS SAYINGS

"If the bear awakes": Added to a sentence to mean *"assuming everything goes as we wish."*

"Off chatting with Ursun": Answering a call of nature.

"Looking at Dazh": Not watching where you are going or being caught unawares.

"Since Dazh's first ride": Something very old, or which has been around seemingly forever. Also *"Until Dazh's last ride,"* which means *"until the end of the world."*

"Tor's Bolt!": A battle cry to unleash fury and death upon an opponent.

"Tor's helper": Alcohol, for those who wish to aid Tor in his provision of courage.

and minds of the decadent southerners. His daughter, too, is venerated for sharing the blood of Boris Ursus. Beyond her, the cult has no figures of authority other than the chief priest in each town. Instead, the cult venerates historical high priests and the legends told about them. These legends include such greats as Hagrim Tooth-talker, who could speak the language of the beasts; Pavel the Bear-Thrower, a man so strong he could throw a bear over his head; and Aged Aelfen, who is said to have sat on a mountain-top so long the stones complained.

Although they have little religious authority, the chief priests of the cities do have some political power. In Erengard, the chief priest is an elderly, affable character called Uika Boyozi. Although he disapproves of foreigners joining in without understanding the holiday, he has been a driving force in organising holy celebrations and can be found dancing a jig in the main square on Waking Day (see the next section: **Holy Days**). Both he and his counterpart in Kislev, Ilori Kleizowski, were old friends of the Tzar, and they miss him and the strong faith he propagated. Kleizowski is known for his dark mutterings about the "good old days" and secretly approves of the True Keepers and their actions.

The chief priest of Praag, Egor Urosh, has neither religious nor temporal power because nobody has seen him in years. For more on Urosh, see **The Temple of Ursun** on page 77.

Holy Days

Ursun has only two holy days, but they are celebrated with great vigour and without fail. The first is Waking Day, which occurs in early spring. In the north, it is typically done when the ice breaks or when the first birds of summer return. In the south, it is observed at the spring equinox. The purpose of the ceremony is to wake the bears from their hibernation. To do so, large groups—sometimes the entire stanitsa—gather in the forests at midday and make as much noise as possible. Pots and shields are banged, drums beaten, instruments played, and children yell; some participants even let off small charges of gunpowder. In the cities, there are fireworks and street

parades—the din is incredible, and nobody can sleep through a good Waking Day ceremony.

Six months later, at the autumnal equinox, the bears are sent off to sleep with the Final Feast. Again, the stanitsa gathers and leaves offerings of meat, fish, and vegetables, which are piled high in the forest for the bears to eat before they hibernate, ensuring they come through the winter healthy and strong.

In Erengard, Waking Day has become a tourist attraction, and traders will remain for the event and the extensive drinking that accompanies it. In Kislev, the Final Feast was so encouraged by Tzar Boris that it became a competition between the boyars to see who could show their devotion the most. Each year, the houses desperately try to outdo each other, producing more elaborate and enormous offerings. Last year, the talk of the city was a life-size model of a cave bear, made entirely from fish paste and garlic, and everyone is keen to see if that spectacle can be exceeded.

DAZH

God of Fire and the Sun

When the world was first made, it was all in darkness and ice. Dazh saw this and took pity on man. He took his great horse and bore his fire across the sky, giving light to the world. Afterwards, Dazh returned to his golden sky-palace to rest, for the ride was long and tiring. However, he saw the people below were cold and afraid without his fire, yet he could not ride out again until his horse was rested. So Dazh gave the gift of fire to mankind, so they might have some of his light at all times.

Dazh is depicted as a handsome young man with golden hair and shining eyes, his body wreathed in fire. Dazh is so dazzling it is impossible to look upon him without being blinded. Thus, if Dazh needs to communicate, he sends his firebirds or the Arari as messengers. The Arari are great fire spirits that dwell in Dazh's golden palace. When they are not serving him, they often dance, producing a colourful display in the northern sky.

Dazh is the kindest of all the Kislev Gods and the one most concerned with man's welfare. In return, he places a great emphasis on proper behaviour. The followers of Dazh are the most dedicated of all the Kislevite priests, and their religion is the most formalised.

WOMEN AND RELIGION

In Kislev, the roles of hunter and warrior are almost exclusively for men and so are the priesthoods of Ursun and Tor. Due to their similar domains, the same goes for worship of Ulric and Taal, though it is known that priestesses of these religions exist in the Empire—something many Kislevite priests take to be another example of the Empire's soft attitude. The Cult of Dazh permits women to join the lower orders, as preserving the hearth is the duty of the entire household, but the scarcity of priestesses in all the other religions makes such an appointment a rare occurrence. In general, religion is a man's world in Kislev.

SYMBOL

The two most common symbols of Dazh are the sun and a flame. Occasionally, depictions of firebirds or the Arari are also used but only on the most ornamental displays. Gold is the sacred metal of Dazh, and the more devout and higher-ranked priests wear this metal to demonstrate their adoration for their God. This shared aspect does not cause confusion with the symbols of Ursun, as his priests only wear gilded bear parts.

AREA OF WORSHIP

Every stanitsa has a priest of Ursun, but every house displays a symbol of Dazh. This reverence is upheld both in the oblast and in the cities. Only the most objectionable of foreigners would live in a house without a mark of Dazh above the hearth. Of course, the observance of all his rituals and strictures varies. The nature of Dazh changes, too. In the north, he is seen as a great saviour whose worship can be a matter of life and death. In the south, he is more a figure of hospitality than fire.

Every city, town, and stanitsa bears a shrine to Dazh. His holy days are dutifully celebrated throughout the nation, and his high priests have considerable political power due to the ubiquity of their faith.

TEMPERAMENT

Dazh is a kindly God only by Kislevite standards. He is very much a prince—sometimes generous but above the people, and he is harsh to those who fail to live by his laws. He can be capricious: ruling over the sky is his chief concern, and he can only attend to the affairs of men when he has time. Sometimes, fires are lost to snows or the kindling runs out. Likewise, he travels to the other side of the world every year to pursue his winged love, leaving Humans to survive as best they can.

Dazh gets on well with the other Gods. Ursun and his children sleep when Dazh is away and awaken to celebrate his return. Tor's axe is sharpened with the help of Dazh's fire. Dazh is so congenial that some who follow Ursun and Tor consider him to be weak. Of course, they don't say such things when the night is coming down, and the flint doesn't want to spark.

The only exception to Dazh's friendliness is in regards to Ulric. As a God of winter, many of Dazh's faithful see Ulric as an enemy or a rival. Others teach Dazh has no concern for Ulric, for he is a God of earthly matters, and Dazh is a God of the sky.

STRICTURES

- Never let a fire go out during the night. Many interpret this stricture as never leaving a fire unattended.
- Never light a fire on a dirty hearth.
- Always give hospitality to those who ask for it, even enemies. Leave none out in the cold.
- Offer sacrifices to Dazh on the first day of the winter snows, so he returns with all speed.

DAZH'S CULT

The Cult of Dazh is the most organised of all the Kislevite cults, though that is akin to being the tallest Dwarf or the least-ugly Kurgan. Most stanitsas have a temple, led by a chief priest called the “watcher.” Watchers may have several attendants, and below them are the young initiates. In a small stanitsa, the watcher may be attended by only two or three faithful; in the cities, a temple to Dazh may hold a hundred men. This disparity is perfectly natural—the larger the city, the larger the duties, the greatest of which is to prepare the temple.

Temples of Dazh are large, circular structures completely open to the sky, like an arena. It is important to pay homage to the sun God in full view of his majesty. In the centre of the circle is a statue of the God and a fire pit or brazier, which in many temples must never be allowed to go cold. In the cities, these temples can be a hundred yards across, complete with a golden statue and hundreds of bronzed braziers. It is up to the young initiates to make sure all these fires do not go out, and many a young cultist of Dazh has lost sleep from monitoring his appointed flame. In small stanitsas, eternal flames are not possible, so the central fire is extinguished at night and relit in the morning, a practice that conveys no disrespect.

The cult has many duties beyond maintaining the temple fires, of course. Prayers must be offered to Dazh at dawn and at sunset by burning incense to thank him for his ride and wish him good rest. These are typically done in the temple, but travelling priests may do them over any fire.

Dazh does not require any particular observances from those not of the faith. He does, however, demand respect for his gift, and as a result, his followers are something like fire wardens. They walk through their stanitsas or neighbourhoods at night, ensuring no fires have been left unattended. They watch over the construction of fire pits and fireplaces and ensure wood supplies are kept dry. Without the Cult of Dazh, it is likely that many a stanitsa would have burned to the ground long ago.

Holy Orders

The Cult of Dazh has no holy orders. Instead the cult is one large hierarchy, the priests of the Kislev temple positioned at the top. Many followers of Dazh place a great deal of importance on this hierarchy, and much time and attention is spent working to ensure the right people are appointed to certain posts. The cult does possess a lay order of lancers, however. Called the Rota of the Dawn, they are employed to guard Dazh's temples from raiding Kurgan and Beastmen. They also act as bodyguards to high-ranking members of the priesthood. Members of the Rota of the Dawn are drawn from rotas based in the southern capital. Thus, these knights have a (mostly deserved) reputation for not knowing a great deal about survival in the oblast.

Cult Skills and Talents

Initiates of the Cult of Dazh always know where the sun is; they begin with the Orientation Talent in addition to their normal career talents. Priests of Dazh may, at their option, learn the following skills as part of their careers: Academic



Knowledge (Astronomy), Outdoor Survival, and Trade (Cook). Followers of Dazh also gain a +20 bonus to all Outdoor Survival Tests that involve lighting or maintaining fires.

Prominent Figures

The current watcher in the capital of Kislev is an officious, paranoid, and wraith-thin man by the name of Macks Tanei. Watcher Tanei is paranoid about two things: not doing right by Dazh and being assassinated or otherwise deposed by jealous attendants. To combat the former, he has created a vast collection of new laws regarding fire lighting, and both he and his attendants are often seen dashing across town to ensure these laws are kept. In trying to combat the latter, Tanei has accused almost everyone of plotting against him, alienating any allies he might have had. He is not, however, likely to be assassinated; politics in the cult are rarely that extreme, and most expect him to die soon enough from the stress he causes himself.

The Tzarina also employs a priest of Dazh within the palace, possibly to reduce her need to encounter Watcher Tanei. Although Katarin keeps in regular contact with the Cult of Ursun, the need to maintain her hearth means only the Cult of Dazh has a representative in the Ice Palace. Fredrek Solzeyn is the current attendant to the Tzarina. He is a dour and dutiful man who also served the Tzarina's late father. It is believed the Tzarina trusts him greatly, but so far, Solzeyn has yet to use this to his or anyone else's advantage.

Holy Days

Every day is a holy day for Dazh. He must be welcomed as his flames leap from the hearth to make the morning meal and

wished well as the coals are extinguished when the household or temple goes to sleep.

The major holy days are the first and last day of the winter snows, when Dazh is bid farewell and thence welcomed back from his ride to the far side of the world, as well as the summer solstice. The summer solstice is the most important and is marked throughout Kislev. On the solstice, Dazh's power is at its height, and he spends the most time shining his fire down upon the world. To celebrate, a great pyre is lit and animal sacrifices burned upon it, typically whole ox, horse, or elk carcasses. In the capital, a dozen head of cattle are slaughtered for the pyre. The faithful also place in the fire pieces of parchment bearing special prayers to Dazh to intercede on their behalf. As the king of the sky, he has connections to all the Gods and so is petitioned for such things as good harvests, good health, and even love and riches.

In the farthest northern reaches, this ritual still exists in its original form, with a Human sacrifice instead of an animal. Typically, the victim is an unmarried girl, for she cannot grow to be a warrior and does not yet care for children. While a sad event, it is not seen as evil in any way—far worse would be to cause Dazh to hide his face and the whole stanitsa freeze to death.

TOR

God of Thunder and Lightning

Ursun is the most revered God of Kislev, but Tor is the most omnipresent. He has no real cult, no particular day or time of worship, few temples, no orders, and only one stricture, but Tor has little need for such things. Tor is part of life. When the sky shakes, and the earth trembles, there is Tor. When the lightning flashes, the thunder rolls, the wind screams, and hail lashes the ground like a horsewhip, there is Tor. He is in the thunder of hooves, too, and the flash of steel, for Tor is a warrior God as well as a sky God. As so much of Kislevite life

THE HEART IS AS A NEW STRUNG BOW

*The heart is as a new-strung bow
It knows not its strength 'til tested
Yet though it wound its target deep
'Tis the bowman's flesh that festers
A woman is as a new-cut axe
She needs no strength for rending
Yet though she bests at every clash
She yields at battle's ending
A fray is as a blazing hearth
Where life and death are found
Our enemies driven back in fear
Our hearts with brothers bound
Death is like the winter chill
No door can keep it from us
And summer yet may bloom again
Though ice be all upon us*

—OBLAST FIRESIDE SONG

is nought but battle and war, Tor is a constant companion, and no axeman goes into the fray without uttering a prayer to him.

Tor is depicted as a mighty warrior, with rippling muscles and a square jaw. He wields a gigantic axe with a haft made of oak and a great, silvered blade. It is this axe he slams into the ground to make the lightning and the thunder and to send courage to his faithful. Tor is also the God of courage, as well as stoic resilience in the face of trial, regardless of if that trial is weathering a furious storm or weathering the charge of a Daemon of Chaos.

SYMBOL

Tor's symbols are his axe, his thunderbolts, or an axe with a thunderbolt for the haft. Tor's followers typically wield axes, large or small, and many carve a stylised lightning bolt onto their weapon arm, or into their weapon's hilt. It is also common to braid patches of hair or beard into a zigzag fashion. Silver is Tor's metal, which Kislevites believe is made when his lightning hits the ground. Devout followers tie pieces of silver thread around their axe blades or weave it into their beards.

Tor's warriors love their axes and mock those who carry hammers, considering it pointless to carry such a heavy weapon that lacks a blade. Short and one-handed swords are also considered ineffectual weapons. Tor worshippers in the military are less particular but still prefer the sabre to the short sword.

AREA OF WORSHIP

Tor is worshipped wherever there are storms and wherever there is fighting. The land of Kislev is no stranger to either of these, so Tor is found everywhere. He is most popular among warriors, and there are very few barrack rooms without Tor's bolt carved in a prominent place.

TEMPERAMENT

Much like Ursun, Tor prefers actions to words. Those who fight well and impress Tor with their courage and strength receive his blessing, which is typically the courage and strength to go on fighting.

Tor cares only for fighting, and when there is no fighting, he amuses himself with the more attractive of Dazh's Arari or practices smashing his axe into the ground. Tor also has little to do with the other Gods, not because he dislikes them but because he prefers to keep to himself. Many of his followers likewise prefer only the company of warriors.

STRICTURES

- Never stand under a tree during a thunderstorm.

TOR'S CULT

Tor has no cult in any sense that a citizen of the Empire would recognise. Instead, there are simply those who are more devout than their fellows. Perhaps Tor saved their life in battle once or sent a lightning bolt to drive off their enemies. Perhaps, they simply enjoy storms or find great courage through prayers to Tor. Whatever the reason, these more faithful types sustain the

cult by adding remembrances of Tor in their barracks and on their shields, leading his fellow soldiers in prayer, and other similar actions. They also tend to any temples that may have fallen into disarray. The more dutiful could be considered a higher “rank,” but they have no more power or authority.

Tor’s temples are very simple yet imposing. They are narrow stone towers with wooden peaked roves and are constructed mostly on bare mountaintops. Inside is a warm place to sleep, a bit of food or drink, a symbol of the lightning bolt, and little else. A passing priest is expected to sweep it out, fill the woodpile, and top off the kvas flask before leaving. There are many of these temples in the Worlds Edge Mountains, some that may not have seen a visitor in centuries. Some are used as traveller’s huts by those caught in a blizzard or a storm, an irony not lost on the storm-loving followers of Tor. Of course, even the most devout son of Tor can get sick of a storm once his boots fill with water.

Holy Orders

Tor has no holy orders.

Cult Skills and Talents

Initiates of Tor begin with the Stout-hearted Talent in addition to their normal career talents. Priests of Tor may, at their option, learn the following skills and talents as part of their careers: Command, Menacing, and Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed).

Prominent Figures

Tor’s nature and haphazard following means there are no authority figures within it, but there are many who have temporal power and are faithful sons of Tor. Many of the highest-ranked boyars and rota-leaders follow Tor, for example. Perhaps most famous is Mikhail Jolnirsson, captain of the Praag city guard. Mikhail was struck by lightning not once but twice as a young *esaul* (an ataman’s steward) and concluded he is particularly blessed by the thunder God. He has therefore bedecked his barracks with countless images of the bolt and the axe, and he commands his men to display the symbols on their uniform. The lightning strikes have addled Mikhail’s brain slightly. The best example is his recent conclusion that a third strike will finally show him what Tor has chosen him for, impelling him to spend a lot of time in storms, wearing a tall, conical, iron hat.

Holy Days

Tor has no holy days. Storms are holy to him, however, and it is traditional for his faithful to stand in the face of every storm and display admiration at his power and fury. Prayers of praise are also offered before and after a battle—sometimes as the battle cry.

LESSER GODS

Although most of Kislev’s theological concerns centre on Ursun, Dahz, and Tor, the Gods of the Empire are often welcome in the communities of this frozen land.



ULRIC AND TAAL

The border between the Empire and Kislev is ill-defined and equally so is the divide between their cultures. Although Ulric and Taal were the Gods of southern tribes, their faith has spread to the north, and their attitudes and domains are a natural fit with the dour Kislevites. Although they are not as popular as Ursun or Tor, these cults are significant in Kislevite culture and politics.

Worship of Taal is common throughout the south, especially along the river that shares the God’s name. The Ungol tribes of the north pay homage to forest spirits and have no need for a forest God. Perhaps because farming is too difficult in the Empty Quarter, few believe in the generosity of Mother Rhya, and she is seen as a minor adjunct to Taal, not his equal. Apart from this, worship of Taal is exactly the same as it is in the Empire. Kislev counts as its own region, ruled over by a single hierarchy, a tall Empire-born figure known only as Oster. He presides over a great stone circle in the Shirokij Forest, near the capital, and smaller shrines can be found throughout the land.

Kislevite priests of Taal gain all the spells of the Lore of Taal and Rhya, though they know Rhya’s comfort as Taal’s strength. Taal is also never depicted as a bear in Kislevite cults—when he takes animal form, it is always as a great stag or reindeer.

As mentioned, Ulric shares much with Ursun, and many a hunter or trapper prays to the former to keep the wolves at bay and the latter to keep the bears away. The Cult of Ulric is mostly confined to the south, but many a southern stanitsa has a statue of a wolf next to a statue of a bear. The wolf is seen as the bear’s young rival—not as smart or as strong but still worthy of respect and is a good source of food and pelts.

THEFT AND DEATH

Kislev and the Empire are ancient allies and know much of each other's culture. However, Kislev simply cannot understand some things, such as the Empire's worship of Morr and Ranald. In Kislev, death is a harsh reality that is never far from anyone's mind. The idea of revering it or pretending there is something beyond it is distasteful to the Kislevites. Likewise, the Kislevites have no time for the idea of venerating those who steal. However, visions and dreams often feature a dark figure in a cowl—who brings death—and his trickster companion. In oblast folklore, they are known respectively as Misery and Misfortune.

Ulric's warrior nature also makes him appealing to the Kislevites, and he is most popular among the soldiers of the south, worshipped alongside Tor. Soldiers may offer a prayer to Tor for courage and to Ulric for strength without skipping a beat. There is also a saying that a good officer must be "bold as Tor, cold as Ulric." As a result, there are several temples of Ulric throughout the south, and his holy days are observed regularly. The Knights of the White Wolf even have a great company based in Erengard called the Knights of the White Star. The Order of the Howling Wolf is not common in Kislev; Kislevites have little need for the "talking priests" found in the Empire.

SALYAK

Salyak is the Kislevite God of healing and comfort and bears much in common with Shallya of the Empire. Like Shallya, Salyak is depicted as a woman in white or a white bird, and those of her order are charged to tend to the sick whenever possible. Salyak is more of a mother of mercy than a maiden, however, and intercedes less than her Empire counterpart. Salyak teaches common sense and sound care but will not save those whose time has come.

Most prayers to Salyak come from young mothers and nursemaids. Salyak knows how to calm a baby to sleep, how to make sure he eats and sleeps well, and watches over him to make sure he grows up to be a great warrior. Salyak also knows how to dull the pain or remove a shattered limb when the boy grows up and comes back from battle. "Salyak's Mercy" is the name of a drink given to dying soldiers; it is a mix of koumiss, mandrake, and hemlock that ensures they die quickly and without pain.

Temples to Salyak are mostly found in cities, where there is some access to the requirements of her ministrations and some chance of them working. Uniquely for Kislev, Salyak's priests can be either male or female. In general, the males tend to the soldiers, while the females work as nursemaids. Some say the priestesses of Salyak are responsible for raising the next generation of Kislev's warriors and, thus, are vital to the land holding out against Chaos.

KALITA

Kalita is the Kislevite approximation of Handrich, the Empire God of merchants and money. However, since gold is the metal of Dazh and silver of Tor, Kalita is associated less with money and more with trade goods and materials. His symbol is the horse or the pony, laden with barrels and crates. Kalita watches over caravans and trade routes, ensuring the goods reach their destination, the roads are not closed by blizzards, and the wheels of commerce continue to turn—something not at all reliable in the harsh climate of the north.

Kalita is only worshipped in the cities and even then only by merchants. He has no temples or any real cult to speak of, and he is only remembered by small symbols or statues on the desks and walls of the counting houses and guildhalls. He is usually depicted as a wealthy, young nobleman and is considered a member of Dazh's court. He appeals to Dazh to hold the snows or darkness at bay for that extra hour or day of travel. Sometimes he is successful; sometimes he is not. Thus, the saying "to trust in Kalita" implies a risky business venture.

— HAGS —

An ancient tradition of magicians survives among the Ungols, and their influence extends even to the Gospodars. The wise women keep the oral lore of the tribes, mediate with the spirits of the steppe, and keep a vigilant eye out for the taint of Chaos.

Naturally, everyone hates them.

That is, of course, a slight exaggeration, but no where are the wise women, or the hags, actually popular. The reasons for this become clear when their activities are examined in more detail.

LORE AND WISDOM

Wise women are primarily called wise because they know much of the history of the Ungol tribes and of their dealings with the creatures of the steppes. They use this knowledge to help the tribe. In some areas, the ability to recollect such information

might make them popular, but on the northern steppes of Kislev, their knowledge consists almost entirely of past disasters and the depredations of the servants of the Ruinous Powers.

Thus, their advice almost always consists of telling people they cannot do things that look like a good idea. That valley might look sheltered and fertile, but it was home to a cult that bound Daemons. Travelling south with the horses might earn a fortune, but if the rota does not perform a particular ritual, then the ghosts of a raiding band of Kurgan will be freed to come after them. And so on.

Among the Ungol, almost no one questions the wise women. There are no traditional stories of what happens when you do. Some groups of Gospodar provide new cautionary tales every year of those who ignored the hags' advice, and Ungols tell tales of the latest disasters to happen amongst their conquerors. The longer a group has lived on the steppes, the less likely

they will disregard a hag's advice, but there are always a few who harbour grave suspicions about the source of the women's knowledge. Some among the Ungol harbour similar doubts but point out that if there really is a Daemon living in the hill, you won't be protected just because the wise woman who warned you was told by that very Daemon.

It helps that, by the time they have seniority in a group, wise women tend to actually be at least somewhat wise, so following their advice very rarely leads to disaster. Doing as they say might not be pleasant, but it is typically safe, and that counts for a lot on the steppes.

SPIRITS

The wise women also deal with the myriad of minor spirits who inhabit the steppes. All wise women have the Sight—the ability to see or otherwise sense supernatural creatures—that lets them seek out the spirits who may be causing problems for a rota and deal with them.

These spirits are typically spiteful and malicious, and trying to destroy or drive them away merely invites greater retribution. The wise women sometimes take that approach, when a spirit is a major threat, but normally, they reach some agreement to appease the spirit, which generally involves the villagers doing something strange and difficult or unpleasant. Sacrifices are not uncommon, though any spirit requesting Human sacrifice would be marked for destruction. Odd rituals or bans applying to the whole village are also common parts of the bargain. Spirits asking for something the village enjoys doing are incredibly rare, so wise women rarely bring good news back with them from their negotiations.

In addition, the wise women are close to the spirits and, thus, could send them to plague their enemies. Some threaten to do exactly that in disputes between villages, and a few can even make good on their threats. Thus, even the wise women who do not have personal magical power may have access to supernatural backing, and that backing does not have the best interests of Humans at heart.

THE TAINTED

Living in a land so close to the Northern Wastes, a land repeatedly trampled under the feet of Mutant hordes, a land that has been warped and reshaped uncountable times by the forces of change, it is only to be expected the people of Kislev will sometimes show the taint.

This manifestation is very dangerous. Those touched by the Ruinous Powers are ready-made spies and traitors. Whenever the taint is manifested, the wise women—thanks to the Sight—can see it and take action. They take the tainted away to the oblast, and he disappears from the knowledge of the village.

The taint normally manifests in children soon after birth, and parents give their children up without protest. But they don't necessarily like it. While they might admit it is not the fault of the wise women their child is a Mutant, it is hard to avoid blaming the people who actually take your child from you.



It is even harder when the taint is not visible and something only the wise women can see. Gospodars often protest in those circumstances, and sometimes, the wise women must resort to stealth to remove the threat from the village.

AMONG THE TAINTED

Almost everyone assumes that the wise women kill the tainted, so their corrupted spirits cannot come back to haunt the living. The wise women encourage this belief, but it is far from the truth.

Rather, the tainted are taken to remote, hidden communities, where they are enslaved and forced to lend their assistance to the hags for whatever sinister purpose they might have. Most tainted do meet their end quickly through brutal torture or the exhaustion of their life energy for some ritual or another. Those with the stamina to endure the hag's cruel caress are eventually sent north to find their deaths fighting in the Chaos Wastes. The wise women justify their actions with the excuse that the only way a tainted soul can be purified is to fight against the forces that inspired the corruption, and so they instruct the tainted to fight and die for Kislev.

There are many theories as to where this tradition originated, not that the wise women's tactics are known far beyond their ranks. Those who are aware of this procedure claim that the wise women are simply following the same customs as those used by the Norse, who also send off their altered to find their destinies in the depths of the Shadowlands. Others believe that dispatching these suffering mortals to a violent end is nothing more than purging their lands of unwanted corruption.

FAMOUS HAGS

Down through the centuries, many famous hags have existed. Given here are three examples, but there are many more, some of whom have numerous legendary deeds attributed to them.

Baba Khubleya

When Khubleya was born, the spirits were said to have gathered in unseen numbers, clamouring to take her youth. She was an extremely ugly babe, having wrinkled skin, wisps of white hair, and rotten, black teeth. The wise women recognised the blessed birth and immediately took her away to be trained. Now eight years old, Khubleya is an extremely powerful fortune teller, and Ungols travel from far and wide to have their fortunes told by the wizened child.

The Sea Hag

History has forgotten the name of the witch now called the Sea Hag. Once she advised Khan Wieran's defence against the Gospodars when Erengard was still the Ungol capital of Norvard. However, her curses were nothing to the freezing magics of the invading ice witches, and after a bitter war, her people were driven into the Sea of Claws and slaughtered. Legends claim she lives there still, under the waves, sending the spirits of her people to curse the Gospodars with undiminished rage.

Baba Osuleg

Said to live in an isolated hut made from the bones of fallen Ungols, the hideous Baba Osuleg trains a large community of the tainted deep in the Troll Country. However, Osuleg recently developed a mutation, and her centuries of service will mean nothing if the wise women find out. So, Osuleg is making preparations to hold them off, as her work is more important than an extra limb or two, and cannot be allowed to stop.

RECRUITMENT

The wise women recruit all girls chosen by the spirits. In practice, that means all girls with the Sight (the Magical Sense Skill). These girls are taken while young from their parents and spirited away to be trained with the other wise women. Among the Ungols, this practice is accepted, albeit rarely with good grace. Among the Gospodars, the wise women sometimes have to abduct candidates, which only adds to their reputation as child stealers.

MAGIC

Most wise women cannot use magic beyond the Magical Sense Skill. A few, however, are touched further by the spirits and have the ability to shape spells. This touch has two side effects. First, the wise woman apparently ages more quickly than normal, so a wise woman of thirty summers might look

like a crone of sixty. This aged appearance does not affect the wise woman's mental or physical abilities, so the ancient crone might be much spryer than one would expect. This effect is why the magic-wielding wise women are referred to as hags. Hag witches are those who wield basic magic, while hag mothers are the most powerful among them. Second, the magic slows down the hag's actual ageing. A hag can easily live to be over 100, and some live far longer than that.

ORGANISATION

The wise women do have a nationwide organisation, but its activities are quite restricted. Most problems are dealt with by individual wise women or small groups, and they rarely feel the need, or desire, to call for assistance from other wise women. Nevertheless, all wise women acknowledge the authority of the old mothers, the oldest and wisest among them. Most of these women are hag mothers, but some are drawn from among the oldest wise women. The old mothers determine where the tainted are trained and decide on what missions the tainted will receive. Old mothers are also responsible for the initial training of wise women and choosing which ones will become hags. In theory, they could set other policies for the wise women, but "fight Chaos" has been a good policy for generations and seems unlikely to change any time soon, if ever.

Most wise women live in villages or nomadic bands, looking after that group. Most hags live away from other Humans, either alone in remote areas or travelling from place to place. This division is not absolute, and exceptions exist in both directions, though isolated wise women are rarer than hags living in settlements. Often, more than one wise woman lives in a settlement, though in such an instance, one is the settlement's wise woman, and the others are her apprentices and assistants. This practice is maintained partly to ensure wise women have the necessary experience before taking responsibility for a settlement and partly to provide insurance against the sudden death of a wise woman.

ATTITUDES

"The only thing worse than having a hag in your stanitsa is not having a hag in your stanitsa."

—CHAGLYN, UNGOL ATAMAN

The Ungols do not like the wise women, but they tolerate them and follow their advice because they know the alternatives are even worse. Almost all Ungol villages unite to defend their wise woman against external threats, as a few witch hunters from the Empire have found to their dismay. Of course, in a few cases, they don't get around to intervening until after the witch hunter has tortured her bit, just in case she really is serving Chaos.

"The hags have their place—as far as possible from me, for preference."

—RADII TYURIN, GOSPODAR WINGED LANCER

The Gospodar are much more suspicious of the wise women. They believe these women all have magical powers, put curses

on people—particularly Gospodars who displease them—and use their magic to trick virile men into finding them attractive. On the other hand, Gospodars do, grudgingly, recognise the wise women serve an important function and, thus, do not normally persecute them. Most Gospodars would prefer the hags to serve their important function a long way off, however.

“She’s a witch! Burn her!”

—GERD VON BLACHESDORF, EMPIRE MERCENARY

People from beyond Kislev tend to believe the hags are obviously witches in league with Dark Powers. Empire folk are particularly prone to this belief, and witch hunters in Kislev often get into serious trouble.

— ICE WITCHES —

“Long ago, many Gospodar clans lived upon the Endless Steppe. Like today, it was a vast province and was lashed with the terrible energies of Chaos. The Gospodars were beset by all manner of foul foes, and the Daemon Gods offered surcease from these attacks if the Gospodars would but bow their heads in worship. But the Gospodars were stubborn. Unlike their neighbouring tribes—the Kurgan, the Hung, and the Norse—they would not be coerced; instead, they turned to other Gods, Gods they hoped could protect them from the northern taint. Most important among these was Ursun the Bear, who taught his worshippers how to survive the freezing winters, how to war against Chaos, and how to respect the spirits of the land. But, even with Ursun’s help, the Gospodars’ plight was desperate.

Then a great spirit—called “The Ancient Widow,” “Kislev,” or simply “The Land”—whispered to a Gospodar shaman-priestess. It promised her great power if she swore to seize a distant, frozen realm where the spirit was trapped by the Daemon Gods. The shaman,

desperate to aid her people, readily agreed and was granted the power of winter in return. With the Ancient Widow’s guidance, the shaman quickly mastered her new powers and used them to gather what she needed to fulfil her promise. Soon, she had bound the disparate Gospodar clans into a single people and placed herself above them as their first Khan-Queen. This done, she took her people and began her search for the Ancient Widow’s land.

After generations of bloodshed on the Endless Steppe, a descendant of the Khan-Queen led the Gospodars across the Worlds Edge Mountains. There, wide-eyed, she encountered a vast snow-covered plain pulsing with icy power. She immediately collapsed to the ground and wept frozen tears, for she knew her search had finally ended. By this time, there were many women wielding the Khan-Queen’s cold magic, so when the Gospodars blew their horns of war, the native Ungols, Ropsmenn, Ostermarkers, and Ostlanders had little chance against them. The Gospodars swept down from the mountains



and founded a new nation in the lands of those they conquered, and their Khan-Queen, Shoika, became the first Tzarina of Kislev.

Now, many centuries later, those who practice the old, cold magics of the legendary Khan-Queens are known as ice witches, and our power has not been diminished by time."

—MILITSA LUSHADOCH GMELIN, ICE WITCH

THE SISTERHOOD

The ice witches of Kislev are more than just women with the ability channel the Ancient Widow's cold flows; they are an organised sisterhood who works together to achieve shared goals. Formed over a thousand years ago by the Khan-Queens, the ice witches have manoeuvred their way into influencing almost all matters in Kislev.

They strive to ensure almost nothing is beyond their reach. They suppress competing philosophies and magic and promote those sympathetic to their causes. Even the cults have been carefully monitored and guided through the centuries. The witches are keen to ensure no Kislevite religion ever gains the same all-encompassing power seen in other Old World nations, as such supremacy often heralds the suppression of their kind.

This manipulation is suspected by some. But as witches are an integral part of Kislev and its defences—and have been since its foundation—few believe it.



KISLEV'S PROTECTORS

Most Kislevites believe the ice witches' first duty is to protect Kislev. They are wrong. In truth, the ice witches guard the icy magic that courses through Kislev. To most ice witches, defending Kislev is simply a means to that end.

However, protecting their magic is no simple task.

First, they must protect the source. The network of leylines carrying Ice Magic throughout Kislev flows into many nexus points, most of which are capped by ancient Oghams (standing stones). Some of these magical sites boast Elven ruins; others boast the sacred sites of ancient, long dead Human tribes, such as the Scythians or Belthani. Most such sites have an ice witch guarding them, who often lives in a nearby Gospodar settlement. The witches believe loss of these sites will diminish—and perhaps even taint—their Ice Magic, so they do anything to protect them.

One step the ice witches take to ensure the safety of their magic is to attack and divert potential threats long before they arrive at important sites. This course of action requires influence amongst the local communities, for each stanitsa funds rotas of cavalry and soldiers to protect the land surrounding it. So, ice witches maintain contacts within most Gospodar—and even some Ungol—communities, all the better to ensure threats are tackled swiftly.

But to do this, it is essential that local leaders heed the ice witches. So, the witches have infiltrated most of the noble bloodlines of Kislev down through the centuries, positioning themselves as wives, mistresses, and confidantes. From these influential positions, the witches have worked tirelessly to become entrenched in Kislevite society, manoeuvre their number into positions of power, and ensure their sisters are heeded. Now, they are almost always listened to and often obeyed. Their influence in Kislev is almost unrivalled.

MEN

The ice witches guard many prophecies and legends. One claims a male witch will one day taint the pristine flows of Ice Magic, changing it forever. So strong is the ice witches' fear of a male witch that ever since the days of Tzarina Shoika, men have been banned from becoming spellcasters in Kislev. This decree has been justified with claims that men are unsuitable for magic and will surely fall to corruption, and these beliefs are now strongly held by all levels of society. To this day, male hedge wizards are tracked down and killed by the state. Or if they are noble, they have their magical capabilities removed by witches using a ritual similar to Pacification in the Empire. For details on Pacification see *Realms of Sorcery* (page 69). However, this ritual leaves the man a hollow shell, and many soon give in to insanity and despair.

To avoid this, some bloodlines of Gospodar nobles smuggle sons demonstrating possible magical talents to the Colleges of Magic in the Empire. Few return, for Kislev does not accept men practicing the female art of magic, but this recent

development still worries the witches, for it undermines their claims that men are always corrupted by magic. Thus, a number of witches are calling for something to be done, and a few are already making plans to resolve the problem.

RECRUITMENT

Every year, as part of the winter equinox celebrations, ice witches tour local Gospodar communities and appraise shivering lines of peasant girls to see if any have the spark of magic within them. This talent is very rare, so it is uncommon for even one girl to show the necessary potential. But any that do are whisked away to become apprentice witches.

Amongst the nobles, this ritual is almost identical but normally takes place indoors. There, well-dressed girls are brought before a cool aunt, grandmother, or other relation, who tests to see if any are blessed by their Khan-Queen ancestors. If any are—and the talent is more common amongst the nobles—the girl is removed from society and trained at her relative's estate.

However, apprentices are accepted at any time. Whenever an ice witch comes upon a Gospodar girl with the talent for magic, she is duty-bound to take her in as an apprentice or, at the very least, to take her to another witch for training—after all, very few noble witches would ever lower themselves to apprentice a peasant.

MAGIC

As should be expected for a magic with its roots in wars on the Endless Steppe, Ice Magic is deadly and extremely so, not just for the witches' enemies but for the witches themselves. Many apprentice witches do not survive their training; indeed, some can be found to this day in isolated corners of the oblast, frozen eternally as sparkling statues of ice by the magic they failed to control.

For those that do survive, it never gets any easier. Ice Magic can surge out of control at any moment, so constant vigilance and careful preparation is required. Further, the magic leaves its mark upon those that cast it: ice witches are cold, many would say heartless, for they soon come to mirror the frigid magic they channel.

Full details regarding Ice Magic can be found in **Chapter IX: Magic and Miracles** on page 110.

ORGANISATION

The ice witches have no formal titles or positions. Instead, they have an ever-changing political structure with individual standing based upon rank in Kislev, current situation, bloodline, beliefs, who trained them, who their apprentice is, who they know, deeds done, strength at channelling Ice Magic, and a dozen other factors. Several factions have formed over the last thousand years, and most work hard to get their agendas across. However, as there are not a great number of ice witches, these factions are rarely more than a handful of like-minded women.

NOTABLE ICE WITCHES

Many ice witches beyond the Ice Queen are known by the Kislevites, and some become prominent figures of note.

Vajena Ursolavnuka

Vajena has watched over the land to the north of Volokva for thirty years. Her mistress died during her training—frozen solid by the magic she was trying to teach her apprentice—so Vajena was never fully educated in the ways of the sisterhood. Since this time, Vajena has given into the frigid magic and has become cold, harsh, and unfeeling. She allows none to trespass in her land and has even killed two ice witches who investigated her territory.

Kazahaila Yevschenko

After fifty strict years maintaining Frosthorne and a score of apprentices, the noble-born Kazahaila disappeared in the oblast over twenty years ago. However, when Erengard, the city of her birth, was sacked, rumours circulated that the uncompromising witch had returned. If true, she would be at least a hundred years old, so many of her old opponents dismiss the claims as ridiculous; however, the rumours persist, and as Kazahaila was always an opponent of the bloodlines from Kislev city, she could prove to be a difficult thorn in the Ice Queen's side.

Daryna Borinado Bokha

Rumours circulate of witches lost to the ice, unfortunates driven insane by the Ancient Widow's frozen magic. When the Ice Queen sent messengers to check on the progress of her young cousin, Daryna, they encountered a horrific scene. Even though it was summer, the isolated palace and all its lands were frozen solid, along with the ice witch responsible for Daryna's training. The girl was never found, and some claim if she ever is—and is harmed—the Ice Queen's wrath would be terrible to behold.

The witches' only formal gathering is the annual Erengard Caucus in the Frosthorne. Starting on the day after Shoika Day (the summer solstice and Kislevite New Year), witches travel (if they can) to Erengard to discuss matters of import, record deaths, share lore, meet old friends and enemies, and generally politick. They meet on the summer solstice because the cold flows of Ice Magic are at their most sluggish, which helps ensure magic is not used to settle arguments, for disagreements often occur.

The caucus can last anything from a few days to a week, depending upon what the witches table for discussion. By the end, the most powerful witch (currently Tzarina Katarin, though she infrequently attends) declares the decisions made by her sisters for the coming year, which are decided by majority vote.

Bokha Palace also hosts an informal gathering for the noble ice witches on *Miskaden* (the spring equinox), after which there is a feast and a dance. Peasant witches are suspicious of the event,

for they suspect the nobles decide what they will table and vote for at the coming caucus, allowing the Ice Queen to ensure her policies go ahead even if she does not attend.

ATTITUDES

"The ice witches are not a matter of preference or opinion. They are a matter of duty and respect."

—ANDROVO ELENASYN, GOSPODAR BOYAR

The Gospodars have long been influenced by their ice witches, and as they are entrenched into the ruling caste of Kislev, this dominance is unlikely to change soon. Further, many Gospodar communities across Kislev are watched over and advised by ice witches, and most can make demonstrable shows of their devastating powers if invaders arrive. Thus, the witches are very popular, though most Kislevites are still wary of them.

Unlike the Ungol hags, ice witches are unable to easily detect the influence of Chaos, so they do not remove people for seemingly no reason. Which means, even though they are less effective at combatting the subtler influences of Chaos, they are far more popular because of it.

"Baba Gyulk tells Dahzyn they good for land. They protect Ancient Widow and sacred places. This good, Dahzyn thinks. But Dahzyn not like them. They are cold and don't care for Dahzyn. They send Dahzyn's krug to death."

—DAHZYN THE SHARP, UNGOL HORSE ARCHER

The Ungols do not like the ice witches, though they do, usually, respect them. This dislike is because the ice witches,

especially those of noble birth, are renowned for requisitioning Ungol resources whenever they deem fit and back their requests with Gospodar might.

However, such contempt is not universal. It does not appear to extend to the Tzarina, whose position and reputation seem beyond reproach, even though she is a Gospodar witch. Further, the hags are strong proponents of the ice witches' goals—if not their methods—for they recognise their efforts to safeguard the Ancient Widow's land. However, the hags' support only makes them less popular amongst their own communities.

"They have an ice witch? Run!"

—ÞÓRFN ÞÓRSSON, SARL OF THE TROLL COUNTRY

In the north of the Old World, the ice witches are usually feared, hated, or both. They terrify most kyazak, and even a rumour of an ice witch is enough to beat many into retreat. Because of this, killing an ice witch is an event of great celebration amongst the Kurgan and Norse and often heralds spectacular and gory rituals to their Dark Gods.

Amongst other Old Worlders, the ice witches are viewed with the same suspicion all magic users are. Their continued existence amongst the country's nobility has been the source of more than one zealous crusade into Kislev because many Sigmarites perceive them as blatant Chaos worshippers of the worst kind. However, such distrust has become less common since the reunification of the Empire after the Great War. Beyond the Empire, the ice witches are not well known. Occasionally, the Tzarina sends one as an ambassador to a distant court, where the glittering, frosty witch is guaranteed to attract a great deal of attention.

— CUSTOMS —

As with all peoples, the Kislevites have special ceremonies for birth, marriage, and death. Given their perilous existence, it is perhaps not surprising that the Kislevites have more ceremonies for death than for happier events.

BIRTH

Public rejoicing at a birth in Kislev is muted because no one knows what will happen to the infant in later life. Among the Ungols, the first ceremony is a visit from the village wise woman, who checks for taint, and if there is none, she pronounces the child's curse (see **Table 8-4: The Hag's Curse** on page 91). Many Gospodars place a newborn baby within a closed crib, specifically to stop passing wise women from checking for taint.

A few days later, once it is clear the baby is not going to die immediately, it is commended to the protection of Dazh and officially welcomed into the community. In hamlets and small villages, everyone gathers, while in larger settlements, the ceremony is attended by friends, family, and authority figures. The child's father and mother then pass the baby through the flames of a large fire, symbolically burning away any bad luck

or Chaos taint and bringing the child to Dazh's attention, drawing down his protection.

It is regarded as very bad luck if the baby does not start crying when passed through the fire and even worse luck if it is noticeably burned. Actually dropping the baby into the fire is taken as a sign from Dazh that the baby is touched with Chaos, and the parents are restrained from drawing it out.

MARRIAGE

Marriage is a joyous occasion across the whole of Kislev. Weddings are traditionally watched over by both Ursun and Dazh, and most families try to have priests of both Gods present. The main feature is a feast—with lots of drinking—that goes on until everyone is unconscious or until the food and drink runs out. It is considered a bad omen for the marriage if the food runs out and an even worse omen if the drink fails.

Toasts and speeches are an essential feature of the feast. In a wide area, predominantly in the south, the festivities start with a feast where all the male guests stand in a circle and take turns proposing toasts in praise of the bride. In some areas,

MATRYOSHKA

Matryoshka, or Kislevite nesting dolls, were originally made by the Ungols to protect against evil spirits. A newly married woman was gifted a hollow, wooden doll by her husband. At the birth of their first child, the husband sawed the doll in two and placed a smaller doll within. At the birth of their second child, the smaller doll was sawed in half, and a doll representing the second child was placed within, and so on. It was believed the dolls, as long as they were intact and together, would attract evil spirits in the place of their counterparts.

Although the tradition has died in most parts of Kislev, the dolls are still made, but they are now mostly decorative. One matryoshka typically has one “mother” and eight “children,” each beautifully painted in bright colours. The Ice Queen is said to have been presented with a six-foot matryoshka representing her entire nation upon her coronation, containing 1,000 progressively smaller dolls within.

the women are present; in others, they are not, and in a few, only the bride is present. The presence of many women often postpones the point at which the praise of the bride becomes obscene until the men are so drunk their words can hardly be made out. If only the bride is present, the delay depends on how scared of her, and the groom, the guests are.

Traditionally, the last man standing at this feast gets to marry the bride on the following day. These days, the intended groom is drinking watered wine out of a thimble (often the bride’s thimble, though that custom is not yet universal), while everyone else drinks kvas out of beakers. Men with a particular reputation for holding their drink are served with bigger beakers and tend not to object. In a few cases, a jealous rival spikes the groom’s drinks in an attempt to knock him out, but unless the bride is also looking for a way out of the marriage, this deceit does not tend to work. In a few cases, the bride, groom, and rival have all conspired to get out of an arranged marriage this way, and the weight of tradition makes it hard for the families to object.

The wedding ceremony is quite simple, followed by another feast at which the groom can safely drink himself into insensibility. This time, it is common for him to have the biggest cup.

FUNERALS

Kislevite funerals are unusual in that they are almost never held for people who are actually dead. Instead, funerals are held for people who might as well be dead, given the risks they are about to face, including all members of a village’s rota, as well as all women who aim to bear children. Thus, a boy’s funeral is held immediately after he joins the warrior band, while a girl’s is held immediately after her wedding.

A pyre is built in a public place and solemnly lit by the person (or persons) whose funeral it is. The relatives then begin mourning his death, as the “dead” person casts a symbolic childhood possession into the flames. After the mourning dirges—which vary from village to village—have been sung, everyone gathers in a circle to tell stories of the “dead” person’s devotion to duty. The “dead” person stays outside the circle, moving to stand or sit behind whoever is currently speaking. These stories are an opportunity to tell the “dead” person what

is expected of them in their new life and are often traditional tales of heroes or mothers with the appropriate name substituted.

Occasionally, someone dies before they have their funeral. In these cases, the corpse is dressed up and moved around by relatives, so it can play its normal role in the proceedings. Foreigners find this even creepier than a normal Kislevite funeral. Given Kislev’s northern location, corpses are occasionally not as quiet as they should be, which is one reason why funerals are held around a pyre; if the corpse gets frisky, strong men throw it into the flames.

If there is no body, there can be no funeral, so the person in question is not regarded as formally dead. Such a situation is rarely a problem, however, as the transition to adulthood is, in most cases, marked by a funeral. In lands distant from Kislev,



distorted reports of this custom have given rise to the rumour that Kislev is plagued by hordes of the Undead.

But even in Kislev, people do actually die. Warriors are generally strapped to their horses and sent out into the oblast; although, depending on the cause of death, the corpse may be burned. If the horse also died, the warrior may be

burned sitting on his horse. Non-warriors are almost always burned, but no one formally acknowledges what is going on. Informally, friends and family grieve and comfort one another, but officially, the village is merely disposing of some waste. Foreigners sometimes form the impression that Kislevites are callous. Such is not the case; they have simply already said their goodbyes.

— SPIRITS, SMALL GODS, & KISLEVITE ODDITIES —

The people of Kislev believe the Gods are the greatest of all otherworldly creatures but also believe there are innumerable lesser spirits who must also be appeased. The nature of such creatures reflects the minds of people they encounter, reinforcing the creature's character and giving rise to traditions particular to Kislev. Throughout Kislev, it is considered right to honour such lesser spirits, for it is a mark of good manners and intelligence to do so. Neglect or disrespect of these spirits is seen as a display of low breeding and ignorance; furthermore, it is just plain unlucky! If a peasant stopped by a spring to drink, he would be wise to ask permission of the spirit that dwelled there first. Perhaps more than most lands, Kislevites have a great many traditions, superstitions, oaths, and expressions that arise in respect to these spirits.

The *Domovoi*, or “kindly grandfather,” is the most common of all Kislevite spirits, a well-meaning, though thoroughly mischievous, spirit that can take the appearance of an old, withered peasant with a long, grey beard or even a cat or a mouse. In houses, inns, and taverns where bread and a small bowl of milk are occasionally left out for the *Domovoi*, it invisibly helps with small domestic duties such as cooking and cleaning. However, if the *Domovoi* feels neglected or if the household is lazy, it is known to mess up farmyards, tangle needlework, and spread animal manure on the door of the house. One cautionary folk tale of Kislev tells of a man who tried to rid his house of the *Domovoi* only to be suffocated by it in his sleep, so it is a rare household that would deliberately set out to annoy a *Domovoi*! But however the *Domovoi* is treated, he is frequently a mischief maker, and peasants and nobles alike are often woken from their slumbers by an invisible tickler or by the noise of mysterious knocking or thrown plates and pans.

When working in the fields, peasants often ask for the blessing of the *Polevoi* and the *Poludnitsa*, spirits of nature said to bestow fertility on the soil of farms that honour them. Similarly, it is considered good luck to offer these spirits a little grain from the harvest to ensure they do not become angry and render the soil barren.

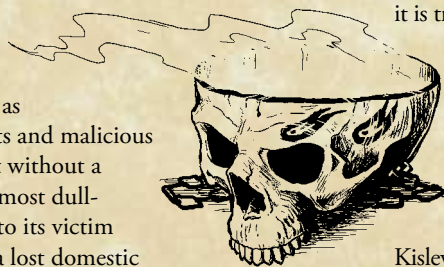
While most spirits in Kislev are generally benign, there are those that actively seek to do harm, such as the *Leshii*, a spirit of haunted forests and malicious desires. Often resembling a peasant without a belt (a sure giveaway to all but the most dull-witted), the *Leshii* can also appear to its victim as someone they know, a beast, or a lost domestic animal. Frequently, it tries to lead gullible victims

towards dangerous places, such as cliffs, swamps, or the lair of a dangerous monster. The *Leshii* is known to hide woodcutters' axes just when a vicious bear or wolf is approaching, so it is customary for woodcutters to carry a spare knife (known as a *Leshii* blade) for just such occasions. Particularly comely girls are often forbidden to walk alone near forests for fear that a *Leshii* might carry them off to an unknown but doubtless unpleasant fate.

The *Vodianoi* is a particularly evil and dangerous water spirit who entices people to the edge of rivers or pools and drowns them for its own vulgar enjoyment. It often appears as a naked old man with a long beard and green hair who sits at a river's edge and begs for help (a plight most Kislevites could not ignore), but in the north of Kislev, there are more outlandish tales of it appearing as a creature that is half-fish, half-Human and drips with slime—though how such a repulsive creature is able to entice people to approach it is never explained. This spirit may also be linked to the *Rusalka*, which is said to be the spirit of a drowned maiden that is angry at her untimely death and seeks to drown passers-by to present to the underworld in exchange for her own life.

The *Ryzhnyi Khoziain* is one of the most feared spirits of Kislev, for no folk tale dares describe it other than as an evil, winged spirit that howls across the steppe on the darkest, coldest nights. None who have seen the *Ryzhnyi Khoziain* have lived to tell of it, and chilling tales persist of riders discovering entire villages vanished overnight, no trace remaining of its inhabitants or livestock. Unlike many other Kislevite spirits, there appears to be no way to placate the *Ryzhnyi Khoziain*, and all peasants can do when they hear its mournful howling is close their eyes and pray to the Gods that it will pass them by.

In addition to these spirits, there are countless others that go by many local names and have their own associated traditions. The origin of many of these has long been forgotten, but the superstitions arising from these spirits persist in many of the stanitsas of Kislev. For example, in the village of Chertza, it is traditional for the hetman to walk around his village naked for the entire first day of the harvest gathering, while in a number of communities along the Lynsk, it is customary to walk backwards with an onion tied to one's head on days when a cormorant's cry is heard before breakfast. Though such traditions are probably meaningless and only serve to make the Kislevites look even quainter to their foreign neighbours, it would be a brave peasant who dared to ignore them.



THE OBLAST

*"Kislev is land, and land
is Kislev!"*

—KISLEVITE SAYING



Most of Kislev is taken up by the oblast, a broad, empty, frozen land, punctuated by small settlements, rivers, and raiding bands that glorify the Ruinous Powers. To most outsiders, it is a soul-killing area and devoid of anything of value. To Kislevites, however, it is Kislev. Kislev is land, and land is Kislev.

Adventurers in Kislev must deal with the oblast at some point, even if they deal with it by travelling through it as quickly

as possible to get to somewhere more interesting. The oblast is not divided into formal regions, and all areas have a lot in common. However, most Kislevites roughly divide the area into north, south, east, and west oblasts, plus the Troll Country in the northwest. Kislevites tend to think the Troll Country is smaller than most cartographers do, but Kislevites are more tolerant of monsters and frigid landscapes.

— PLAINS OF ICE AND SNOW —

The oblast is large, empty, and cold. There are few settlements, fewer roads, and not many forests. Such circumstances mean this area poses particular challenges to travellers; many ways exist for the unwary to be killed by the land.

THE COLD

Winter in the oblast is cold most of the time and dotted with occasional periods of extreme cold. On a really nice day, it might be simply cold, which poses no particular problems. More intense frigidity, however, can kill.

Very Cold

Characters must pass Toughness Tests every six hours, around dawn, noon, dusk, and midnight. A success means the cold does nothing more than make them miserable, while failure means the player takes a cumulative –10 penalty to all tests. Should the penalty exceed the player's Toughness Characteristic, the character freezes to death. For every six hours spent in a warm environment, this penalty drops by 10.

Extreme Cold

A character must pass a Toughness Test every three hours. Each failed test imposes the customary cumulative –10 penalty to all tests, but it also inflicts damage from frostbite. The character loses 1 Wound for every 10 points by which he failed the Toughness Test. This loss bypasses armour and Toughness Bonus. If the damage causes a Critical Wound, it is always to either an arm or leg. People do lose limbs to the cold, but the damage never leads to uncontrollable bleeding, so ignore those aspects of the Critical Effects tables. Instant death does happen; the cold shock simply stops the character's heart.

COUNTERMEASURES

Warm clothing, fires, and the like are a big help against the cold. Sitting or sleeping around a substantial fire moderates the temperature and avoids the need for Toughness Tests. It does not, however, count as a warm environment for the purposes of recovery unless the fire and character are in an enclosed space, such as a house or tent. Sleeping while sharing a blanket with



another warm-blooded creature (generally a Human or a horse) also removes the need to make tests but cannot actually make the character warm.

The Toughness Test should be modified based on what the character is wearing. Standard Imperial cold weather gear merits an unmodified test. Lighter outfits should impose penalties, up to -30 for light swimwear. Heavier outfits grant bonuses of up to $+30$, though the heaviest gear is bulky and interferes with free movement. Standard Kislevite oblast gear grants a $+20$ bonus. In addition, anyone who has lived on the oblast for at least a year gets a $+10$ bonus to the tests, as his body adapts.

Most Kislevites stay out of extreme cold—even nomadic Ungols pitch their tents. Otherwise, they make sure to keep warm at night, which generally allows them to recover from the cold, even if they were out in it all day.

BLIZZARDS

Snow is not uncommon in the oblast, but blizzards are far worse than normal snow. The combination of heavy snow and wind reduces visibility to almost zero and the effective temperature to extreme lows. No native Kislevite would suggest travelling through a blizzard unless staying still meant certain death. Of course, in Kislev, that is not as rare as might be wished.

Characters moving through a blizzard move at one quarter their normal rate. All Navigation Tests take a -30 penalty and must be made each hour rather than each day. On a failed test, the characters head in the wrong direction but do not realise it until the blizzard ends. Once over, a Navigation Test reveals they are lost, but the test to work out where they actually are is normally

Very Hard (-30). Don't forget the effects of characteristic losses due to the cold's effect on the ability to navigate.

GETTING LOST

The lack of landmarks in the oblast makes it easier to get lost at the best of times. Navigation Tests must be made every day, unless following a trail, and they are normally Challenging (-10). However, characters in areas that they are intimately familiar with, such as the area around their own tirsas, get a $+30$ bonus, and tests to reach a general area are Average ($+0$). So generally, rotas of winged lancers can find their way home from anywhere in Kislev; they simply head for the right general area and then adjust once they're on home ground.

GOING MAD

The oblast can strain the minds of those not used to it. Anyone raised in the oblast is immune to these effects, but city-raised Kislevites are just as vulnerable as Tileans. Every time a vulnerable character wakes up lost in the oblast, he must pass a Will Power Test or gain an Insanity Point.

LITTLE SPIRITS

The oblast is home to innumerable minor spirits. They are very weak, capable of making noises and moving small objects short distances, and seem to lack intellect. They also seem to ignore groups of travellers, preferring to target lone individuals. A few people think there are no spirits and that the noises are nothing more than early signs of steppe-induced madness. However, Kislevites are absolutely sure they exist.

While they are not friendly, they are not necessarily malicious, either. For every story of someone lured to his doom by the sounds, there are tales of inexplicable bells waking a traveller just in time to avoid becoming a meal for wolves. As far as plausibility is concerned, the latter stories have the advantage that the protagonist generally survives to tell it; the source of the former type is more obscure.

FEATURES OF THE OBLAST

There are a few types of terrain found all over the oblast, with only minor variations depending on the area. Even Kislevites do not know about, much less keep track of, all the features of their land.

ISOLATED SETTLEMENTS

Given the large distances and difficulty of travel found in the oblast, isolated settlements are common. Their rulers may remember there is a Tzar, but their concerns are more local. In many cases, these do not go beyond survival, but darker goals are far from unknown.

Enisov

Enisov is a village nestled in a valley, overlooked by the brooding fortress of its boyar, Stepan Krasnyi. The sheltered valley floor is farmed for arable crops, and sheep and cows graze on the slopes. The inhabitants avoid climbing to the tops of the hills, convinced there are terrible monsters lurking and ready to pounce as soon as they discover the village's location. Visitors may be attacked on sight as scouts for the monsters or not allowed to leave for fear they will lead the monsters back.

TAINTED RUINS

The tides of Chaos have ebbed and flowed across Kislev for millennia and have left behind the ruins of ancient and long-forgotten civilisations. Those who disturb the ruins may find treasures or horrible deaths.

Rose Ruins

These squat stone structures seem to have been built for people a little shorter than Humans and a little taller than Dwarfs. The inhabitants dug into the ground for cellars, many of which are now collapsed, and few of the buildings seem to have had more than one storey. There are a significant number of smashed statues lying around, but it is hard to see how to put the fragments together to make any reasonable creature.

The ruins get their name from the deep red roses that grow over the stone as creepers, blooming even in the depths of winter. The thorns on these creepers are unusually long and sharp, adding an additional hazard to exploration.

HAUNTED BATTLEFIELDS

Kislev's history is not short of battles against the forces of the Ruinous Powers, and accordingly, the land is not short of battlefields. Win or lose, many brave warriors and foul creatures were inevitably slain, typically among the workings of powerful magic. As a result, many battlefields are haunted by far more than memories.

Fedokova's Isle

The battle at Fedokova's Isle is recorded as a note in particularly comprehensive histories of Kislev. A rota of winged lancers and a unit of kossars were cut off by a particularly large raiding party and took refuge on this island, and they mounted a defence while riders went for help. Alas, the riders were intercepted, and the defenders, at length, were slaughtered to the last man.

The ghosts of the Kislevite warriors still defend the island, driving back any who try to land on it. It may be possible to convince them that Humans are allies, in which case the ghosts might help defeat pursuers. Some of the Undead here retain much of their wits and can be persuaded to help in a good cause. They can also work out when they have been tricked.

— SOUTHERN OBLAST —

Location: South of the Lesser Tobol, west of the Worlds Edge Mountains

Major Settlements: Kislev, Gerslev, Resov, Vitevo

Economy: Arable farming, crafts, forestry, government

THE LAND

The southern region has the mildest climate in the country, and, as a result, is the main farming region. Arable farming, at least of oats, is possible almost everywhere, and there are even some orchards. The southern part

of the region is covered with a forest that extends unbroken into the Empire, though it becomes darker and dominated by

fir the further into Kislev it comes. The land is flat even by Kislev standards, with only one major range of hills that runs south from the capital city. There is relatively little steppe-land left, and a casual traveller could almost mistake it for a particularly rural part of the Empire.

The city of Kislev is by far the largest settlement in the region (see **The City of Kislev** on page 78), but all the stanitsas here are on the large side, and

"The heart of Kislev is here. A heart of ice, holding us firm in the face of great threats."

—BORODA NATALYASYN, BURGHER OF KISLEV

"They're all soft southerners, with no more courage than a Tilean."

—KHAVAL, TROLL COUNTRY UNGOL NOMAD

"Dressing a bear in fine silks does not make it civilised, though in the city of Kislev it could pass at court."

—OTTO OF ALTDORF, MERCHANT (NOW DEALING WITH THE TILEAN TRADE)



even the tirsas are typically the same size as Empire villages. The rules for oblast conditions given earlier in this chapter really only apply in the border areas, where this region merges into the other areas of the oblast.

THE PEOPLE

Southern Kislevites are relatively civilised and almost entirely Gospodar, which leaves them open to accusations from the north of being soft. In compensation, they are among the most enthusiastic warriors in the country, and stanitsas put even more effort than normal into turning out the best rota of winged lancers they can manage. There is only one sense in which the people of this region are soft: it is the only area of Kislev where the lifestyle would not survive the burning of half the settlements. Northerners who have fought alongside southern rotas never make critical statements.

The people here have the most negative opinion of the Empire, in part to distinguish themselves from their Empire neighbours. The main reason, however, is that it is not uncommon for Empire troops to pass through the southern oblast and demand food and shelter on their way to fight in the north. The southerners only see the demands, never the battles.

SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS

There are many settlements in the southern oblast; Chernozavtra, Igerov, and Voltsara are all significant, in addition to the three described here.

Gerslev

Gerslev is the stereotypical provincial town, the place that bungling country bumpkins come from in the jokes told in the city of Kislev. The citizens know this and try to break the stereotype by achieving the heights of culture and fashion. Unfortunately, these attempts just make the jokes worse, as they are mocked as know-nothing provincials who try too hard. Ironically, foreign visitors find Gerslev is the most cultured town (it seems wrong to call it a stanitsa) in Kislev; the plays of Detlef Sierck are standard repertory at the three theatres, Bretonnian love poetry is constantly in and out of vogue, and there's a reasonable chance the boyar won't serve kvas.

The ruling boyar, Irina Putortin, is trying to put together a unit of riflemen to supplement the winged lancers that are the city's pride, especially after the rota was reduced to one quarter of its full strength in the Chaos Incursion. Most Kislevites see this as yet another sign of a provincial town that does not know its place.

SAYINGS OF THE SOUTHERN OBLAST

"Empire guest": Someone who treats his host like a servant, breaks things, and then expects the host to be grateful

"He's racing Dazh": Said of someone with a job to finish in a hurry, particularly if it needs to be finished that very day

"Snow and salt": The natural and man-made perils of life

"Stinks like a river of dung": Used to describe someone who is up to no good or wares that are suspect

Resov

Resov is a fairly large stanitsa that is noted for its isolationism. It has walls, and travellers are not allowed inside without very good reason. Those who have gone inside report every home was shut and barred and that they saw almost no one on the streets. The ostensible reason is fear of an attack by the Ruinous Powers, but people have other suspicions.

On the other hand, the stanitsa pays its taxes, and its rota answers the call to the pulk in good time and good order. The winged lancers keep to themselves, even in the pulk, but fight as bravely as anyone else. Indeed, their losses in the Chaos Incursion were such that some believe the stanitsa will be forced to accept immigrants.

Vitevo

Vitevo is a bleak little community built up to support the penal colony assembled to work in the Tzarina's salt mines. A place of unforgiving and cruel labor, everyone who descends into the mines is an indentured servant, a convicted criminal whose lot it is to work off the debt of his crimes. The nature of the workers makes Vitevo a rather unusual town since it does not produce its own rota. Instead, it depends on kossars, and occasionally chekist, dispatched from the capital to ensure the site has a military presence as well as to keep the sometimes unruly prisoners in hand.

A high wooden wall cordons the entire community. Inside the rough wood and stone perimeter are crude wooden barracks erected near the entrances to the numerous minds. The entire compound is designed to keep people in, though, and not out. In the shadow of the steep walls is a small settlement that serves to house the guards as well as the honest men and women who transport the salt to larger settlements. This little village is anything but safe and is in many ways as dangerous as the vicious barracks. The reason for this trouble is that there is little to do here, so little that the most popular pastime is swilling kvas. As one would expect, this causes no shortage of trouble and forces the officers to take rather extreme measures to keep the men in line. Flogging is common, but for the more violent offenders, they find themselves joining the other convicts in the mines for as much as a week. Such punishment is often a death sentence. The prisoners have little cause to love the guards and make sure their time spent in the black earth is as painful as it is for them.

Relatives of some prisoners come to Vitevo in the hope of relieving their condition. The most determined and inventive actually manage to do so by bribing the overseers in some way. Most, however, fall to despair.

— EASTERN OBLAST —

Location: Between the Lynsk, the Lesser Tobol, and the mountains

Major Settlements: Praag, Bolgasgrad, Volksgard, Sepukzy

Economy: Trade from the east, crafts from Praag, herding, forestry, and some farming

THE LAND

Much of the eastern oblast is true steppe land, though south of the Lynsk there are some croplands to be found as well. In the east, the foothills and lower peaks of the Worlds Edge Mountains are counted as part of the region, and much timber is brought down from the forests to supply the more settled stanitsas.

The region is fairly well settled, thanks in part to the trade route to the far east that starts in Praag. Nevertheless, stanitsas and tirsas are of normal size for the country, and there are more than a few krugs roaming the northern and western steppes.

THE PEOPLE

The eastern oblast is attacked from two directions. Kyazans come from the north and west, raiding on behalf of their dark masters, while Greenskins pour down from the mountains to raid for the sake of raiding. The people of this area are almost constantly fighting for their own survival. They tend to feel residents further south do not appreciate their sacrifices, and these days, there are many who feel that the ingrates down there had the Storm of Chaos coming.

The region is populated by both Gospodar and Ungol families and actually has a number of mixed settlements. The Ungols here are the most organised in the nation and are the ones most likely to talk seriously about restoring their old power. The hags here have a great deal of influence, and even the Gospodar take them seriously.

SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS

Praag is by far the most significant location in the eastern oblast and is defined in the **Praag the Cursed** section on page 69.

Bolgasgrad

Bolgasgrad is a fairly large stanitsa, dominated by Gospodars and proud of its rota of winged lancers. Its boyars have a tradition of

strong-minded independence from the central authorities, as well as a history of being replaced with appointees from Kislev. The appointees often seem to go native.

The stanitsa is most notable for its recurrent problems with Undead, both intelligent and otherwise. The rota is often called upon to hunt the unliving down, and the Temple of Morr is the most popular in the settlement, eclipsing even Ursun and Dazh. Almost everyone is convinced there must be a necromancer of some sort in the area, but repeated attempts to hunt him down over the past few decades have always ended in failure. Even when a necromancer was caught, the Undead problems did not end, suggesting the true cause is still at large.

"We are the first line of defence against the hordes of Chaos, much as the Tzarina would like to forget it."

—TORUS, WARRIOR OF PRAAG

"So much corruption has washed through that region it is hardly surprising some has stuck."

—NATALYA, ERENGRAD CRIME LORD

"Dangerous to get to, dangerous to be in, and dangerous to be from. But you can get goods from Cathay far, far cheaper than they sell in Altdorf."

—REINER OF NULN, MERCHANT

Sepukzy

Sepukzy is one of the largest settled groups of Ungols in Kislev and has no permanent Gospodar residents. The stanitsa supplies its horse archers to the pulks, but they are not up to the standards of the true nomads; the residents are debating raising a rota of winged lancers instead, but traditionalists are strongly opposed.

The hags are very strong in Sepukzy, and several old mothers reside here. It is a major centre for the later training of wise women, when they are introduced to the issues of advising a settlement. No one here would dream of going against a wise woman's advice. At any time, at least three of the hags from the stanitsa are off in the north, at a secret location. They do not always come back, and speculation as to what they do is rife. None of the hags say anything, however.

Volksgard

Volksgard is the last major settlement before the High Pass and, thus, the place where outbound caravans do their last bit of re-supplying and celebrating—or their first bit after coming back. As a result, entertainment and travelling supplies are very expensive, whilst exotic imports from distant Cathay are relatively cheap.

The stanitsa is also the target for repeated Greenskin raids and has high walls as a result. The population is about two-third Ungol, but the need for constant siege defence means it does not have either horse archers or winged lancers to call its own. This deficiency is rarely a problem, as Volksgard is almost never required to send troops elsewhere.

SAYINGS OF THE EASTERN OBLAST

"Gone trading north": Off on an utterly insane mission doomed to failure

"Grandmother's boy": Someone who follows the hags' guidance, particularly if he is a Gospodar

The Storm of Chaos was an exception, and a troop was mustered and sent off under Maximilian Trask, the march boyar. None came back, slaughtered to a man. The stanitsa is now near anarchy, and the Tzarina is interested in finding someone reliable (loyal to her) to go and restore order.

Urszebya

Urszebya, Ursun's Teeth, is a valley dotted with many standing stones. It is said to be the place where Ursun took a bite out of the world, leaving some of his teeth behind, and it is deeply sacred to all Kislevites. Even those who have never been here—

few Kislevites are afforded such an opportunity—know of it and revere it. Over the centuries, it has also been the burial place of many of the greatest heroes of the land, a practise that adds to its reputation.

Urszebya was the site of one of the greatest battles of the Storm of Chaos, where an army led by the High Zar Aelfric Cyenwulf and accompanied by a Dragon Ogre was defeated by a combination of bravery and the Tzarina's magic. It was a bloody victory, however, and many soldiers—Kislevite, Imperial, and Tilean—fell. The respect felt for the location is now tinged with sadness at the great loss suffered here.

— WESTERN OBLAST —

Location: Between the Lynsk and the Lesser Tobol, plus the Blight

Major Settlements: Erengard, Milkavala, Zavstra

Economy: Trade, herding, agriculture; generally in complete disarray

THE LAND

The western oblast is largely flat and almost completely devoid of forest. Much of the land is steppe, but the southern regions and the area near the Empire's border are farmed to a significant extent. This area bore the brunt of the Chaos Incursion, and the overwhelming majority of settlements were sacked, including Erengard. The people are rebuilding, but destruction is still everywhere.

In general, the area has the warmest summers in Kislev. But the wind patterns over the Sea of Claws mean heavy blizzards occasionally fall even during the height of summer. The snow rarely lasts long, but it always throws everything into disarray.

THE PEOPLE

The population of the western oblast is largely Gospodar with a sprinkling of Ungols. Most of the Ungols are relatively recent immigrants, as they were driven out of the area completely when the invading Gospodars arrived. In the past, the people of this area were the most open to outsiders, dealing with most of the merchants who came to the country. Isolated settlements were rarer here than elsewhere, though not unheard of, and most tirsas and stanitsas traded with one another freely.

The Chaos Incursion utterly devastated the whole area, leaving very few settlements

viable; many were completely destroyed, leaving nothing more than a tainted patch of earth. The remaining people are determined to rebuild and reclaim their land, but the process

is difficult. Long-established tirsas are now too small to be viable, and while the atamans recognise the need to amalgamate, they are unwilling to relinquish their authority. Some boyars are trying to impose unions, worried pride will lead to the death of those who survived the war. Naturally, most people resent such heavy-handed control. The only reason the area has not descended into anarchy is that people are too busy trying to survive to bother their neighbours.

"We're the gateway to Kislev. Everything comes through here."

—DARYA DOCHPAVLA, ERENGRAD ROGUE

"We will rebuild. The northern hordes cannot destroy the spirit of Kislev."

—SORCA SHALAEV, ATAMAN

"You have to remember Erengard is not representative of the whole of Kislev. Most of it is far less civilised, cultured, and welcoming. No, I don't recommend going beyond Erengard."

—GILLES DE L'ANGUILLE, BRETONNIAN MERCHANT

SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS

The most important location in the western oblast is Erengard (see **Erengard** on page 61).

Milkavala

Milkavala was a perfectly ordinary settlement, either a large tirsas or a small stanitsa depending on who's talking. It raised a small rota of winged lancers but normally sent them to the pulk in co-operation with neighbouring tirsas. The only notable feature was the Temple of Dazh, where a genuine eternal flame had been maintained for decades, something very unusual outside the cities.

Then the armies of Chaos ignored it. Milkavala suffered no damage at all; they didn't even lose a single cow. Neighbouring settlements were sacked and razed to the ground, but Milkavala was untouched. The residents loudly claim it was due to the protection of Dazh, and the

SAYINGS OF THE WESTERN OBLAST

"Hard as summer snow": Used for something that is really difficult to deal with

"Surprised by snow in Kislev": Used for people who have trouble dealing with something they really should have foreseen



local priest encourages pilgrims to the temple, but some people have darker suspicions. The winged lancers were not so lucky, and some of the survivors have doubts about what their home may have done to survive.

Zavstra

Zavstra is a town on the border with the Empire and is sometimes included in the southern oblast. However, its openness to the people of the Empire means it fits better with western culture. The old town was completely destroyed in the Storm of Chaos, along with most of the population. People have returned to rebuild, and the physical structure is coming along very well.

The problem is that about half of the new residents are from Kislev and the other half from the Empire. The town used to be predominantly Kislevite, but now the returning refugees have accepted the help of those from destroyed parts of the Empire. Most of these Empire folk still regard themselves as citizens, and the Temple of Sigmar faces the Garden of Ursun across the central square. Neither government has yet pressed its claims to control the stanitsa, but there is no way the situation can be left unresolved indefinitely. Unless things are handled very carefully, violence is likely, and some speculate war between the Empire and Kislev could be possible.

The Blight

The Blight is a large moor that is mostly uninhabited. A few tirsas dot the edge, making their living by mining peat, but the central regions have no known Human residents. They are known to be home to monsters of various kinds, including Greenskins and Beastmen, as well as Mutants. Parts of the great Chaos Horde are thought to have taken up residence here; certainly, raids by monsters have increased in recent times. The swamp is generally thought to be tainted and to have an unnatural origin. Many tales report there are great treasures hidden in the centre, but most people think that these are just tales.

— NORTHERN OBLAST —

Location: Between the Tobol and the Lynsk

Major Settlements: Krasicyno, Zoishenk, Zvenilev

Economy: Herding

THE LAND

Most of the northern oblast is classic steppe—plains or gentle hills covered with long grass and grazed by herds of horses and cattle. It has harsher and longer winters than more southerly areas, and the weather can easily turn very cold in spring and autumn. Even the Ungol nomads pitch camp for the winter.

There is no agriculture to speak of; the few exceptions are found in sheltered valleys or where corrupt atamans have made foul bargains with the Dark Gods.

The steppe is broken by the Crag of Shargun, which overlook the Blight. These hills almost become mountains and are distinguished by steep, rocky slopes, sheer cliffs, and numerous caves. Local stories

say that they were created during a duel between two great Daemons, the blows of their axes tearing up the ground.

THE PEOPLE

The population of the northern oblast is largely Ungol, though there are a number of Gospodar stanitsas. The Ungols are almost exclusively nomads, meaning the settlements are predominantly Gospodar and do not give an accurate impression of the area as a whole.

This area of Kislev is the most battered by the land's curses. Winter is harsh, and raiders from the Troll Country and the Chaos Wastes are a constant threat. Every adult has helped fight off a warband at least once, typically several times. Every fixed settlement has been besieged many times and sacked more times than the residents can remember; Kislevites here regard knowing when to run away as

"Is wall of Kislev, moving like blizzard, yha?"

—YURIN, HORSE ARCHER

"Your Empire exists because we stop the raiders. You think the Storm of Chaos was unusual? That is our life."

—WARVARA PRONIN, NORTHERN ATAMANKA

"That's Troll Country, not really part of Kislev."

—WERTHER MUNCK, EMPIRE SCOUT

the highest form of courage, as it will never be possible to prove afterwards that you ran too early. On the other hand, atamans who do not run at all usually see their people destroyed within a few years.

The details of the constant battles fought here are little known in the rest of Kislev, never mind the rest of the world. Those who live here feel that they defend an ungrateful world and get nothing in return.

SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS

Settlements in the northern oblast tend to be smaller than elsewhere. Many southerners regard the region as part of the Troll Country and not completely without reason.

Krasicyno

Krasicyno is a stanitsa in the east of the northern oblast, noted as the site of one of the major battles of the Storm of Chaos where a large force under the High Zar Okkodai Tarsus was shattered by combined Kislevite and Empire forces.

The battlefield—which is only a short distance north of the town, in and around a thorn wood—is possibly the most haunted battlefield left by the Incursion. Whenever Mórrslieb is full, warriors can be seen fighting over the same ground, only the forces of the north seem to be winning. The original battle was turned by the arrival of forces from Stirland, but they do not seem to be present in the replay.

Thus far, the spirits have not spread beyond the battlefield, but they have killed a few overly curious and unwise individuals who wandered into the middle of the fray claiming it was just a vision. As a result, most people have left Krasicyno, and those who remain are hags searching for a way to put the spirits to rest.

SAYINGS OF THE NORTHERN OBLAST

“Unflinching fighter”: Someone who is not brave enough to run away and fight another day; serious insult if addressed to a leader, especially a rotamaster

“The other horde is always greener”: Everyone wishes for troubles different from the ones they have; stereotypically, invading Greenskins rather than northern raiders.

Zoishenk

Zoishenk is probably the largest settlement in the northern oblast, a cattle-town with a solid stockade and a defensible position on the Tobol. It is a popular mustering point for pulks, as it is on the edge of the Troll Country, which is where the pulks typically head. During the Chaos Incursion, it mustered troops from the north and headed south.

The stanitsa took remarkably little damage during the storm; it was besieged by a couple of small groups of raiders but survived largely intact. Most people agree the hordes were simply avoiding distractions on their way south. As a result, it is even larger now than it used to be, refugees swelling its numbers.

Zvenilev

Zvenilev is incredibly remote, located in the depths of a forest in the Czegniks. Some people are unconvinced it even exists, and very few people can back up claims to have been there. The settlement is more of a fortress than a tirsas, populated almost entirely by the chekist and, it is said, a handful of ice witches. The traders who take supplies there say they are turned away at the gates and required to travel quickly away from the settlement. In compensation, they are paid very well, and they keep the precise location secret to avoid competition.

Speculation as to the purpose of Zvenilev is rife. It must be something vital to the defence of the Tzarina, or the chekist would not be involved. But just what that could be, so far from Kislev, is a mystery. People who speculate about the Dark Gods do so very quietly and, even then, only with people they trust. Most people wonder in the safety of their own minds.

— TROLL COUNTRY —

Location: Beyond the Tobol

Major Settlements: Leblya

Economy: Herding, subsistence

THE LAND

The Troll Country consists of steppe slowly turning into tundra as one travels north before meeting the great mountains and the edge of the Chaos Wastes. It is some of the least-forgiving land in the Old World, and no farming is possible. There are some forests and two main

ranges of hills, but for the most part, it is largely flat. It is easy to travel for days without seeing any settlements here.

The weather is harsher than in most parts of Kislev, frigid weather extending through spring and autumn. Winter

can blanket several feet of snow fall over most of the area, making movement impossible. On the upside, movement is impossible for raiders as well. The Kislevites who live here spend the winter in one place, preparing for the troubles that come with the thaw. By the time the weather does break, they

“Really, what is the difference between the different groups up there?”

—ZOYA MOZOROV, KISLEV SOCIALITE

“Easy distinction. We serve you dinner. They serve you as dinner.”

—JALYV, UNGOL NOMAD

are generally looking forward to them.

THE PEOPLE

The population of the Troll Country is overwhelmingly Ungol and mostly nomadic. Fixed settlements are targeted repeatedly by raiders while nomads can just move on. Out here, nationality is largely a matter of choice. Most Ungols and virtually all Gospodars regard themselves as Kislevites, but some do not, and the local boyars can do nothing about it. There are Norsemen who live in this area year round rather than simply raiding, particularly the Sarls in the north, and they are a far more serious problem. For more details on the Norse, see *Tome of Corruption* or *ToC* (page 138).

The Ungols and Gospodars out here take hospitality even more seriously than Ungols elsewhere. Anyone is welcomed, but hardly anyone is trusted. Those who prove to be friendly over time may find that, after a year or so, they are no longer attended by heavily armed hosts at all times.

SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS

As there are very few settlements in the Troll Country, most of the significant locations take different forms.

Leblya

Leblya is one of the largest settlements in the Troll Country and probably the most significant as it is often designated as a mustering or fall-back point for the pulk. As a result, almost anyone raised in the Troll Country knows how to get there, which makes it good as a general meeting point.

The stanitsa is built around an old Scythian mound, and the settlement's zal, or main meeting hall, is built atop the mound. The rest of the buildings are between the mound

SAYINGS OF THE TROLL COUNTRY

"The far south": The region around the city of Kislev

"Winter visitor": Either something completely unbelievable (someone arriving during winter) or something completely unwelcome (someone arriving just as the first snows of winter fall)

and the stockade and, thus, receive some shelter from the weather. Leblya was attacked several times during the Storm of Chaos but never fell. Its ataman, Sevhim, is very proud of this, though now he talks about the Empire demilancers who came to relieve his stanitsa, a slight distortion of the facts.

Chamon Dharek

Chamon Dharek is a great grave mound, sacred to the Kurgan and strong with tainted power. It is surrounded by mummified horses, and within it is a vast treasure in gold and gems. The treasure is cursed, however, and not even the foul reavers of the north dare to touch it.

Raiders from various northern factions often winter here, and members of different factions can stay without too much bloodshed, as the respect they hold for the location restrains them from overt war. Even in the summer, there are normally warriors and shamans of the Ruinous Powers here. The Kislevite nomads are careful to stay as far away from the cursed place as they can.

Zamak Spayenya

Zamak Spayenya is a great white rock, a league or more across, rising from the steppe. Its top is almost flat, and its sides are very steep, making it a useful temporary redoubt. The limestone contains caves, many of which are decorated with paintings dating back centuries; the place was sacred once. Now, it is little more than a landmark or convenient stopping point. The caves provide shelter, and a pool within the cracks of the rock provides fresh water whilst the slopes provide defence. In the summer, it is not unusual for groups of nomads to meet here, in which case its size is useful in allowing Ungols to keep their distance from one another.



CITIES OF KISLEV

"I do not care what our prey think of us. Do you consider what opinion meat has of you?"

—CONSTANTIN VON CARSTEIN



For most travellers, Kislev is more empty than full. Scattered through the wilderness are tiny holdfasts, isolated communities that cling to what passes for roads as if for life, and whilst more common in the south, the distance between these outposts grows until one can travel for days on end without seeing any sign of humanity. For this reason, it's understandable while many Empire folk regard Kislev as little more than a primitive backwater, a useful buffer to be sure, but of little

worth beyond serving as a barrier against the unruly hordes of Chaos. In spite of the ill-informed and disparaging comments passed between the more comfortable folk of the softer southern lands, there are cities in Kislev, massive sprawling affairs, islands of civilisation in a vast sea of wilderness. Each city represents a different facet of Kislev culture and history, reflecting the land's importance to the Old World and its colourful people in their customs, architecture, and placement in this frozen land.

— ERENGRAD —

Erengrad was founded as Norvard by the Ungols at possibly the best natural harbour on the Sea of Claws. Its position and ability to act as a gateway to trade ensured its prosperity, and the Tzarina Shoika realised its conquest was essential to the unity and prosperity of the emerging nation of Kislev. She captured the city, drove out the Ungols, and rebuilt and repopulated it as the Gospodar port of Erengrad.

The city prospered, attracting traders from across the Old World and even Elves from across the ocean. It also attracted more dubious elements and soon became notorious as a place where one could set up any sort of deal within a day or two of arriving. While it's true that one could buy anything at Marienburg eventually, it takes longer to make contacts there than at Erengrad. Pirates found it was much easier to sail to Erengrad than to pretend to be legitimate in order to sneak into other ports. This clientele made Erengrad rough but also kept it wealthy, and as the local

boyars lined their pockets, the Tzars in Kislev did not care to enquire too closely so long as tax revenue flowed.

Over the last century or so, the guilds of Erengrad have been getting steadily more powerful and important, as the boyars distanced themselves from the details of trade, and those who were directly involved became steadily more wealthy. As described in **Chapter III: Politics of Kislev**, the guilds accepted more direct control from the Tzarina in return for increased powers over the city and steadily supplant the boyars in government. The boyars do not particularly like being brushed aside.

Everything was interrupted by the Chaos Incursion in which Erengrad was sacked. Almost every structure was levelled, and thousands of people were slaughtered by Archagon's armies. Fortunately, the land escaped the corruption visited on Praag, and when the refugees returned, they were

"Erengrad has all the arrogance of the Empire, all the corruption of Marienburg, and the filth of Kislev. I'd live nowhere else."

—HANNAH ROLLSTOFF, MERCHANT PRINCESS

able to rebuild. Rebuilding has proceeded more quickly in Erengard than almost anywhere else, as they are using building materials scavenged from the ruins and brought in by traders. No streets are free of building work, but all the most important buildings have been rebuilt, and the city functions once more.

Both the guilds and boyars had grand plans for redesigning the city to be more beautiful, more welcoming to traders. Unfortunately, they had very different plans, and each group started work on its own ideas. As a result, the city's street plan is a mess, even more so than before; the old centre of Katarina Square no longer exists; it was replaced with the city estates of a couple of guild families, and most old neighbourhoods have moved or been transformed utterly.

The city can still be divided into three broad areas defined by the underlying geography: Harbour, which is over the sea; Low City, on the flat land around the beach; and High City, on the slopes of the hills. The city walls run along the tops of the hills.

HARBOUR

Erengard's natural harbour is good, but it has one major disadvantage: the large area of shallow water between the coast and the deep water haven near the centre of the bay. This predicament led to long piers being built out into the bay, and warehouses—and later homes and businesses—were also built out there to be closer to the ships.

Some people expect this area to be poor, but in fact, it is solidly middle class. The strong tides in the bay have a difference of over twelve feet between high and low tide on an average day, which means that the water flows and carries away any rubbish dumped out of homes above it. Even at low tide, there is a foot or two of water under most of the Harbour area, and at high tide, it comes to within a couple of feet of the bottoms of most structures. As a result, the area is surprisingly clean; rubbish is just dumped into the sea and then washed away.

The other reason it is middle class is that it is not cheap to build houses elevated fifteen feet or more above solid ground, and the support posts need replacing every few years because they rot in the sea water. It's a good area for traders to live, and many Erengard sailors would like to retire here. Most of the reasonable inns and taverns in the city can be found here as well.

Structures do not cover the whole of the bay; they did not do so before the Chaos Incursion, and reconstruction is still in progress. Wooden walkways link buildings and turn into piers as they reach the deep water, allowing ships to tie off in safety. Most of the piers float, to move with the tides, and are connected to walkways by double-hinged sections, which slope downward quite steeply at low tide. It is, accordingly, more expensive to load or unload a ship at low tide as the longshoremen have to struggle up and down the slope.

The Harbour survived the Storm better than other areas. Whilst much was destroyed, some people managed to isolate their homes and fight off the attacks of bands of raiders. They would have been destroyed had the horde decided to try systematically eliminating all resistance, but it moved on too quickly. These people, who never left Erengard, have a strong

feeling of group identity and pride, though it has not yet translated into political activity.

1. Temple of Manann

The Temple of Manann is, of course, in the Harbour. It takes the form of a large ship, supported on massive piers, and at high tide, the keel is under water. It was never designed to sail, but during the sack of Erengard, the priests destroyed the piers as they prayed to Manann for aid, and the temple floated free in the bay. It was attacked several times, but all attacks were beaten back. The scarred structure is now back in place and was the only temple to survive the fall of Erengard intact. The priests claim this as a sign of particular favour from their God.

High Priest Nadyezhda Dochtalika Vdovyn has been blessed with miraculous powers by her God, and after her courageous performance during the Spring Driving, her authority is absolutely unquestioned. Even those residents who have little to do with the sea regard her with something approaching awe. She has yet to do anything with that authority beyond exhorting people to continue to respect Manann. Since people's reverence naturally increased from its already high level after the war, Vdovyn is content for now. Other factions in the city occasionally try to enlist her support, but for the most part, they simply try to avoid attracting her opposition, generally by supporting the temple.

As a result, the temple has started work on a second building, next to the first, again in the shape of a ship. Since Vdovyn feels it would be blasphemous to do more than repair the old temple, all the money for decoration is spent on the new structure.

2. Harbourmaster

The harbourmaster of Erengard is Radii Synvasalisa. It is the most immediately powerful post in the city, as Synvasalisa has the authority to stop any ship from mooring, to inspect any ship at any time, and to levy the customs imposed by the government. Most previous harbourmasters gained the post by virtue of massive bribery. Synvasalisa gained it by being the only qualified member of the Harbour authority to survive the sack. He claims to have kept up a constant campaign of harassment against the occupying horde, and this is, in fact, only a slight exaggeration. He survived by being stealthy, alert, intelligent, and unscrupulous.

He has now turned his talents to becoming rich. It hasn't taken long; he does not owe anyone any money, so he can keep all the bribes he extorts from merchants. He is sharp enough to keep the graft at a low enough level that no one wants to have him replaced, and he has actually increased the amount of customs duty flowing to the city by increasing the efficiency of inspections. Synvasalisa is now bored, however, and looks for a new challenge.

3. Tilean Quarter

The Tilean Quarter used to be built around a spectacular wooden Temple of Myrmidia, but that burned in the sack. The new quarter has a space set aside in the centre for a new



temple, but work has yet to begin on it. The quarter as a whole is notable for having a population of about five hundred and a fixed population nearer five thousand. The whole area is controlled by merchant companies, mercenary companies, and crime families who send agents on short-term postings and replace them at least twice per year. The official reason for the shuffling of posts is that Erengard is a dreadful place with foul weather, worse food, and drink that can dissolve diamonds. Many of the agents appreciate this rotation and feel their superiors are being generous and thoughtful.

The real reason is that Erengard is far enough away for someone to establish an independent power base. Riccioli the Bald, one of the fixed residents, was well on his way to doing that before the sack. He lost everything, including his hair, in that disaster and now rebuilds his contacts. He works as a go-between, introducing people to Tilean mercenaries and merchants and doing the same for Tileans who want contacts in Erengard. It will take a long time for Riccioli to reach his former heights, and his resulting bitterness against the Ruinous Powers knows no bounds.

4. Hag House

The hags have a presence in Erengard because there are some Ungols in the city. But their presence is smaller than they would like; the hags remember Erengard used to be an Ungol city, and most of those living here favour a return to that situation.

Osul, one of the leaders, favours taking advantage of the depopulation from the war to tip the balance in Ungol favour. She actively recruits Ungols to come and live in the city, and she does her best to get them established. This manoeuvring involves leaning on people to provide loans or other help and hiring freelance agents and adventurers to look into problems faced by Ungol communities or prominent individuals. She would like to see a wealthy Ungol merchant but is prepared to wait.

Inalchin, a younger hag, is more impatient and arranges accidents to tip struggling Gospodars over the edge into ruin, death, and, ideally, leaving the city. She does her best to hire non-Ungol agents for these tasks and is remarkably good at hiding her own origins. She looks on the power struggle between the guilds and boyars with barely suppressed glee and is constantly on the lookout for opportunities to fan the flames.

5. Vladimir's General Goods

Before the sack, Vladimir's was a middling to large general supply store with a group of loyal customers and a decent reputation. Vladimir's main building, defended by the owner Vaja Rybkin (Vladimir was his great-grandfather) and his staff, survived the sack, and he worked to support the returning refugees. Even without gouging, this made Rybkin wealthy, and so he expanded.

He was quickly made two offers he couldn't refuse and didn't. The first was from Vladimir Synyuliana, a crime lord who liked the idea of operating out of somewhere already called Vladimir's. The second was from Tatiana Olgadoch, a local commander for the chekist who appreciated the centrality of the business. Both wanted Rybkin to operate a front for

them. Rybkin introduced them to each other and explained his situation, while backed up by the staff who had seen off the hordes of Chaos.

Things went better than he could have hoped. Olgadoch immediately saw the potential of Synyuliana as an informer, while Synyuliana could see many advantages to working with the chekist. He willingly promised not to undermine the Tzarina's authority and to pass Olgadoch information. She, in turn, keeps other law enforcement, such as it is, away from Synyuliana's operation. For the most part, they stay out of each others' business.

Rybkin has also expanded the legitimate business, and Vladimir's is now the largest trader in the Harbour, having half a dozen large warehouses (another is under construction), a wholesale office, and two retail stores—one for perishable goods and one for non-perishable. An attached inn provides somewhere for visiting chekist officers to stay, and it has also become popular with foreign merchants because the service is well beyond the price. The truth is, the entire staff is composed of low-ranking chekist, and so Rybkin has no personnel costs.

Low City

Low City is the poor area of Erengard. It was almost completely destroyed during the Storm of Chaos, but as its inhabitants were the sort of people with nowhere else to go, they soon returned, joined by those from settlements in an even worse state. People are rebuilding, but all the work is cheap and shoddy, as might be expected. There are still a lot of people living in tents; some of these are Ungols—lured in by Osul—who actually prefer that accommodation.

There is a significant advantage to being able to pick up your home and move; Low City is prone to periodic flooding from two directions. The first is unusually high tides, which generally occur a couple of times a year. The second is the Lynsk, which often floods in spring, as the snows start to melt. Tidal floods only last a few hours, until the tide goes out again, but when the Lynsk floods, the water can remain for several days.

The areas of Low City nearest the river and sea are thus the least desirable, which means they are inhabited by the poorest and most desperate folks. The areas inland are more desirable but also more dangerous, as they tend to be claimed by groups of criminals with some resources but not enough to make it worth putting up a facade of respectability. These areas are ignored by the authorities for the most part.

6. Bretonnian Quarter

The Bretonnian Quarter is in one of the most flood-prone and undesirable areas of the city. Many of the merchants here are from L'Anguille and joke that it reminds them of home for two reasons. One is that the Bretonnian authorities give absolutely no support to merchants abroad, making it hard to negotiate for land in a better area. The second is that most of the Bretonnian merchants in Erengard are not making very much money; for some reason, they never seem to strike it big.

As with the rest of Low City, the Bretonnian Quarter was destroyed during the Incursion. Many of the residents are still in tents and shacks, but a fine, wooden Grail Chapel, raised ten feet above the ground on nine massive wooden pillars, has just been completed. Ferragus of L'Anguille, the only moderately wealthy merchant in the quarter, insisted on building the chapel first, in the hope the Lady would bless them. Other residents noted it would be somewhere to go during the floods.

7. Cannoneers' Compound

The city of Erengard is one of the few places outside of Nuln in the Old World where cannons are manufactured. The Sea of Claws is possibly the most dangerous stretch of water anywhere, and ships need good defences against raiders, both Human and otherwise. As a result, a strong demand has always existed for ship-based weapons, and the first Erengard cannon was cast over two centuries ago.

The Cannoneers' Guild has prospered since then and is closely affiliated with the Shipwrights Guild. Erengard cannons are not up to the standard of those made in Nuln, but they are substantially cheaper and lighter, which makes them better suited to ships. And most captains would rather have two Erengard cannons than one Nulner. The steady demand means this compound is possibly the only place in the Old World where someone with enough money (typically 1000 *gc*) can walk in, put down the money, and leave with a cannon. A known ship's captain could actually do that; anyone else would meet with delays, while the guild tried to figure out what the cannon was wanted for. A few mercenary companies use Erengard cannons on land, however.

The Cannoneers' Compound was utterly destroyed during the sack of the city. It did take a fair chunk of the invading army with it, as the last guildmaster, Dazhda Kudrov, detonated the guild's entire store of gunpowder and shot as the enemy approached. The guild has yet to appoint a replacement, claiming they need proof that Kudrov is dead, ideally a corpse. No one really believes he would have left a body, but the guild is uncomfortable with overt hero worship; most believe the actual head of the guild will always be the vice-master in the future.

The Compound is in Low City because it is noisy, smelly, and dangerous. Most of the guild members live elsewhere, though a few live inside the walls. Completed cannons are mounted as advertisements near the entrance and elsewhere around the walls. The guild claims they are not loaded, but no gangs have been willing to call that particular bluff.

8. Temple of Verena

An empty area of land marks the former location of the Temple of Verena in Erengard. The Goddess of Justice has never been popular in a city where most people make at least part of their living illegally, and her priests have never been able to afford a temple in the nicer areas. What they had was destroyed in the Storm of Chaos, and so far, they have only managed to clear the land on which they will build the replacement. As a result, services are held in the open air.

High Priest Bela Ekomov is fanatical in her devotion to the Goddess and organises the few devout worshippers in the city into anti-crime squads. Most of the time, they have to operate clandestinely, and even when they do get criminals arrested, their victims are often released. Such actions do not make the Verenans popular with most inhabitants of Erengard, and they are often targeted by gangs or mobs.

Ekomov maintains a pure devotion to Verena's ideals, but many of her flock lean towards vigilante justice. They do not believe criminals will face justice unless they perform it, and so they organise secret trials. While almost certainly correct in the resulting judgement, they are still violating important Verenan tenets, as these followers are not the proper authorities. Verenans are somewhat aware of this and keep their activities secret from Ekomov. She, in turn, is not enthusiastic about investigating vigilante crimes, though she certainly does not consciously condone such action.

9. The Grand Market

The Grand Market is the heart of Erengard, despite being located in the Low City. It is the place where most goods are bought and sold, and just about anything can be found if you look hard enough. For some goods, flimsy cover stories are concocted, pretending they are something else, but in many parts of the market people do not bother. The only exception, these days, is anything related to the worship of the Ruinous Powers. Such goods used to be available to people who could ask the right questions, but now, the whole city is too opposed to the Dark Gods for it to be a safe trade. Those who specialised in it give the new mood a couple of years, at most.

The market is heavily patrolled by guards funded by the guilds and boyars, as are the main approaches to it. No violent crime or theft is tolerated, though the sale of contraband and outright swindling are not a concern. Erengard merchants are strong believers in "buyer beware" and in exacting revenge if someone dares to swindle them. As a result, the Grand Market is safe for people who know exactly what they want to buy, how to make sure it is authentic, and exactly what a reasonable price is. Everyone else gets robbed to a greater or lesser extent.

Because the Grand Market is subject to occasional flooding, all stalls are temporary structures, and the merchants simply move them—and their goods—to warehouses in other areas until the floods recede. There is normally ample warning, but a flash flood in the Lynsk can lead to mayhem as all merchants flee for high ground at once.

The Grand Market was restored to very near its former glory soon after the hordes left, as merchants arrived and set up to sell to the refugees. It is now flourishing once more, and the area of the Low City around it—devoted to taverns for people who haven't been sufficiently swindled at the market—is already fully rebuilt.

HIGH CITY

The High City is the wealthy area of Erengard. It is built on the slopes of the hills facing the bay, which has numerous benefits.



It raises the houses above the risk of flooding, allows waste to flow away down hill, provides an attractive view, and means the area is sheltered from winds from all directions. As a result, the area probably has the most pleasant climate in the whole of Kislev.

High City suffered greatly in the sack, but the number of stone buildings meant there was plenty of material available to rebuild. As a result, it has recovered more quickly than anyone thought possible, and it is common for walls to include fragments of decorated stone from old carvings or rocks scarred by the attack of inhuman forces. Most people think this adds character to the area.

As noted earlier, both the boyars and guilds planned to rebuild Erengard, particularly the High City, on an elegant and unified plan. The area is now completely disorganised, as parts of both plans have been implemented, along with independent building by groups who never cared what the so-called "authorities" said. Main streets dead end into a wall or suddenly turn into tiny alleyways, and it is not uncommon for a building's blank wall to face a large square, and its façade to open into a small side street.

For all that, the wealth of Erengard is clearly visible; traders from the south expecting a semi-barbarian city are greatly surprised.

10. Elven Quarter

Erengard has one of the largest Elven Quarters in the Old World. While it cannot match that of Marienburg, it may be even larger than the Elven Quarter in Altdorf, and it clearly exceeds anything found in L'Anguille or the south. Although

the great trading houses in Ulthuan decided to withdraw their personnel before the horde arrived, more than half the Elves stayed to help defend their city. They were all slaughtered and the Elven Quarter razed to the ground.

Elves returned soon after the war, and now the quarter is being rebuilt. The bravery of the Elves who stayed gained the race a considerable amount of goodwill, and no one has questioned their motives for building a wall around their homes and warehouses. The wall is thirty feet high and completely finished, and work is going on inside. However, no non-Elves have been allowed within since the wall was completed and the gate hung, so most of the city can only speculate. Money and trade goods continue to flow, however, so the speculation is mostly curious, rather than hostile.

11. Empire Quarter

Citizens of the Empire form the largest group of non-Kislevites in Erengard, but the Empire Quarter is relatively small because many live elsewhere in the city, mingling with the natives. Indeed, about a fifth of the people residing in the Empire Quarter are Kislevites, a much higher proportion than in the other ethnic areas.

The focal point of the area is the Temple of Sigmar. The old one was destroyed when the city was sacked, but preparations for building the new one are proceeding well. Stones from the old structure have been gathered and set aside, the ground cleared, and orders placed for new materials. The new temple is intended to be an even stronger fortress than the last, strong enough to survive any future assaults. This fortification has required deeper foundations, and the excavations opened a set of catacombs that appear to be associated with Sigmarite worship, but so far, two groups of explorers have failed to return. The priests, led by Calvin Three-Hammers, the high priest designate, are looking for an experienced group to find out what the problem is. Nothing has come out, so far, and the hole is guarded round the clock.

The other main building is the Empire Consulate, and this structure is newly completed. No Imperial consul has arrived as yet, but Chief Clerk Jekil Reichert expects one to be appointed very soon. In the meantime, he is dealing with immediate problems and building up a large stack of papers that need to be formally approved by the consul upon his arrival. Reichert is not entirely honest, and a consul who actually reads all of the papers would realise it. But Reichert does not feel that is likely.

Finally, The Shining Comet is an inn and tavern aimed at travellers from the Empire. It provides Empire-style food, drink, and entertainment, and many guests comment that, whilst inside, one might think he was in Altdorf. Kristyn Becker, the landlady, takes that as the highest compliment.

12. Carriers' Guildhall

The Erengard Carriers' Guild is the most powerful guild and, thus, the most powerful single group in the city. It now draws together almost all the native merchants, and "associate membership" includes most foreign merchants (and pirates) who visit Erengard with any frequency.

The Guildhall perches on the edge of a cliff and overlooks the Lynsk. The rebuilt version is a fine, stately building organised around a paved courtyard and opens onto a square. The Guildhall was not built for defence; the merchants withdrew to their manors or fled during the invasion, so they decided there was no point in trying to make their headquarters a strong point.

One new addition is a dedicated suite of law courts in the west wing. The Tzarina granted the guild the right to enforce the laws some years ago, and they now take full advantage of this, far more so than the other two major guilds. They have become more popular than the boyars' courts and are now the busiest in the city. Their popularity is because it is widely accepted the boyars always rule in favour of the nobility, while the carriers can be bought. As a result, Erengard is possibly the only place in Kislev where a rich commoner can throw a poor noble out of his house for poor manners and expect to win the resulting court case.

The guildmaster, Mitri Ilchenko, was appointed by the Tzarina after his predecessor went missing during the sack and is presumed dead. Ilchenko has been a guild member for over twenty years and was generally a popular choice. He has enough sense to know he must retain the support of the guild and has only used his authority to ruin one enemy, Natalya Dochviktoriya, a woman who spurned his romantic advances in his youth. Dochviktoriya now lives in Low City and plots revenge. She no longer has much money, but she does have a lot of contacts and information at her disposal, including some merchants who are sympathetic towards her.

13. Goldsmiths' Hall

The Goldsmiths' Guild is now composed primarily of bankers and moneychangers, though it does still accept actual goldsmiths. By tradition, the master of the guild is always a craftsman, but most of the day-to-day authority is delegated to the dean—a banker appointed by the master. The Tzarina now has the right to appoint the master and need not follow the tradition, but the current master, Ursola Ovinko, is only thirty years old with no plans of retiring. Ovinko is an immensely talented crafter and pleasant company in social situations, as well as being fairly good looking, so the bankers decided, just before concluding the agreement with the Tzarina, she would make a good figurehead. Ovinko has not been interfering with the running of the guild, and everyone, except possibly the Tzarina, is happy with the situation.

The dean, Valantiri Synmishka, is the richest man in Erengard. He may be the richest man in Kislev and would be immensely wealthy even if he moved to the Empire. While his main activities are banking, he also finances a very wide range of activities. As a result, almost any decisions that benefit the guild and the city also make Synmishka personally wealthier. This arrangement means he is virtually incorruptible; no one has anything he wants. He does not, however, want any competition. He is happy to make his peers richer, as long as they are clearly still poorer than he is—anyone coming close to his wealth had best watch out.

The Goldsmith's Hall is a solid stone building because it also serves as a bank and the Erengard mint. Rumours have

it absolutely full of gold, but it is, unsurprisingly, mostly offices. It was supposed to face the Carriers' Guildhall across the square and has a fine gate that mirrors certain elements of the façade of the other hall. Unfortunately, the boyars built their castle on that spot, facing away from the square. The Goldsmiths' Hall faces the castle across a street barely ten feet wide. The castle was built first, so the doors of the Goldsmith's Hall open inward, which means they can be opened fully.

14. Shipwrights' Hall

The Shipwrights' Guild represents all the crafters of Erengard except the workers of precious metal. The guild accepts many crafters as members and has affiliated guilds for some of the more prominent groups such as the Cannoneers. It is the weakest of the three guilds politically, but it represents by far the largest number of people. If it could mobilise them, it would be far stronger.

The current master, Maksim Synkazimira, is not going to manage that. Appointed by the Tzarina after his predecessor fled the city—and has yet to return—he has proven to be almost, but not quite, up to the job. He is not incompetent enough to force people to remove him, but he isn't good enough to do anything more than keep on top of daily requirements. As a result, the guild is basically treading water.

The new guildhall is not yet finished, but it stands on the left of the square as one looks from the Carriers' Hall and is built in a similar style. A number of masons and carpenters have offered to take over the job because the situation is embarrassing, but Synkazimira is reluctant to give up any authority.

15. Castle

The castle is the seat of the boyars and used to be the centre of government of the city. The old castle was destroyed in the sack by some foul sorcery that tainted the site, so the boyars chose to rebuild here, where they could best disrupt the guilds' plans for urban renewal. The castle is a large keep with a single curtain wall and turns a blank face to the square the guilds intended to be the new heart of Erengard. However, the placement of the Goldsmiths' Hall means it is not actually possible to open the castle's main gates fully, for each gate is wider than the street. Access is thus through wicket gates cut into the main doors.

Boyar Elena Yevschenko, the young head of the oldest Gospodar family in the area, has begun fuming over the nobility's loss of authority but has yet to come up with a good plan to restore it. She married into the nobility, but her husband was killed in the sack of the city. Elena lost her left arm, something that has only improved her reputation. Despite her youth, almost all the nobles in Erengard believe if anyone can restore their authority it is her.

16. Temple of Tor

The Temple of Tor is the only substantial building to have survived the sack almost unscathed. Many in the city have taken this as a sign of Tor's special protection, and the cult

has become more popular. The more practical point out it is an empty stone tower on top of a particularly inaccessible hill; there was no one in it to attack, so it probably wasn't worth the bother. A few conspiracy-minded folks have taken it as evidence that Tor is actually in league with the Ruinous Powers or is just another name for one of them. Anyone letting on, in public, that he believes this is liable to be torn apart by a mob.

17. Temple of Dazh

The Temple of Dazh was one of the most spectacular in Kislev, decorated with gold images that reflected the sunlight. The images all went missing during the sack, though rumours persist that a priest managed to hide some of the best before he killed himself to avoid giving away the hiding place when the enemy closed in. Whatever the truth, the rebuilt temple is much plainer.

It stands on top of a hill, where the hills to the east dip into a valley, so there are clear views both east and west. Doors in the wall of the temple frame both the rising and setting sun, and these are the only entrances. The eternal flame burns in the centre of the temple and is carefully tended. The Watcher, Gaspar Synpavla, claims to have kept the flame alive throughout the occupation of the city, and no one can prove he didn't; about half the city's population actually believe him.

Synpavla would like to restore the temple to its former glory, and he takes a great interest in rumours that the Tzarina has started to favour the cult. He would like to send agents to Kislev, subtly offering support in return for decorations for the temple but has yet to find suitably diplomatic individuals. He also has an interest in tracking down any of the old treasures; he thinks some may have been sold, intact, in distant parts of the Old World, and he also investigates the rumours of a hidden cache. For both tasks, he hires outside help.

18. Garden of Ursun

The Garden of Ursun forms the fourth side of the main square, on the eastern side. It is a spectacular place, cascading down the hillside among rocks to finish at a pool formed off the side of the Lynsk. It is certainly large enough to house a bear, and some people claim to have seen one there.

Chief Priest Uika Boyozi is very enthusiastic about the holidays of Ursun, particularly Waking Day. This large celebration was performed without fail before the sack of the city, and Boyozi put a great deal of effort into the first

one afterwards, arguing it symbolised the reawakening of the city, as well as that of Ursun. As a result, the main square has become the centre of the celebration, and it has become even more popular. Some merchants even start sailing early in the season so they can be in Erengrad for it. Some people have started calling the main square Ursun Square or Awakening Square, which annoys the guildmasters who wanted it to be called Guild Square.

19. Temple of Shallya

The Temple of Shallya in Erengrad has a long tradition of receiving rich gifts from dubious individuals who need healing with no questions asked. As a result, it is far less austere than most such temples. It has recovered very quickly after the sack because many people needed help and healing, and building work is nearly finished. Shallyans from elsewhere might not immediately place it as a temple, instead thinking it was the home of a noble who was particularly devoted to the Goddess.

High Priestess Svetlana Zakarova does not mind, as she is used to the relative luxury in which she was raised as a temple orphan. She is, nevertheless, devoted to Shallya; her position in the city is secure because she remained throughout the sack, helping the wounded and getting people out and to safety. She has no obvious miraculous powers, but most people think her continuing life is a miracle.

20. Frosthome

Frosthome is a tower of ice, home to the ice witches of the city. It stands on a peak just inside the city walls and glitters in the sunlight. Most citizens think it is a marvel of magic, an opinion shared by many visitors. Those who have seen the palace in Kislev, however, are much less impressed.

The ice witches have traditionally stayed completely out of politics and are currently under strength, as most of them died in the defence of the city. This valour has created a chance for them to move into politics, as many people in the city have a great deal of admiration for their bravery and power, but they have yet to take it.

21. Temple of Morr

The Temple and Garden of Morr in Erengrad are unusually large, covering several acres because the area seems to be particularly affected with the power of the dead; the living and Undead who stray within it soon weaken and die if they do not leave. This effect makes it a perfect place to bury the dead, as they cannot rise again and renders the area unfit for

THE GARDEN OF MORR

Any living animal within the Garden of Morr in Erengrad takes a cumulative -5 penalty to all characteristics every 30 minutes it remains there. If this penalty exceeds the creature's Toughness Characteristic, it dies. Undead creatures gain a cumulative -5 penalty every ten seconds. Lost characteristics recover over the course of a night's sleep outside the area. Plants are immune to the effect as are characters with any of the following talents: Arcane Lore (Death), Divine Lore (Morr), or Dark Lore (Necromancy).

anything else. There have been many arguments about the cause and nature of this unusual effect, and few can agree. Morr's priests suggest that Morr once napped here and thus caused the place to become infested with the killing aura, but the truth is far stranger. Among those who have no cause to fear death and are familiar with Erengard's oldest histories know this place was the site of an ancient magical catastrophe that infused the air, water, and soil with killing energy. Over the centuries, this energy has waned, withdrawing to the

immediate site and gradually receding with each century. Who and what caused the calamity has been lost, but most claim it involved Dark Magic and the legions of Chaos.

The temple was destroyed in the sack, though it took many of the invaders down in the process, and rebuilding is proceeding slowly because the workers must spend plenty of time away from the site. The priests of Morr are in no hurry, however.

— PRAAG THE CURSED —

It takes a lot to kill a city. They are not immortal; they can fall, but it takes a cataclysm or catastrophe of epic proportions to do it. In the Great War of 2302 IC, Praag was hit by something like that—by a force of Chaos so destructive and so terrible that a lesser city would have crumbled. And since then, more forces have come and tried to finish the job. But Praag is great and terrible, and although over and over the armies of Chaos broke it and burnt it and desecrated it, it did not die.

Perhaps it should have.

Though rebuilt again and again, Praag can never shake off the legacy of its endless sieges and the destruction left behind. Mutation and madness taint its people, depravation and decay eat away at its streets, and the siege mentality endures eternal. But Praag has never been a shrinking violet, and its people are not prepared to give up and move elsewhere. Praag may be dying, but it is defiant to the last.

HISTORY

Praag is the oldest city in Kislev, built by Ungol lords before the coming of the Gospodars. Located on the Lynsk near the mountain passes to the east, it was a natural trade-hub: meat and hide were gathered from the surrounding stanitsas, and stone and silver flowed from the mountains. The town soon gained the nickname "the silver city," not only because of its chief source of income but because the streets and buildings were decorated with the substance and other precious metals, until its gleaming onion domes and high-peaked roofs could be seen for miles.

This wealth had another purpose as well. Their northern position made Praag vulnerable to attack, yet they were always far from the minds of the rulers in the capital. Thus, Praag devoted itself to becoming a place of stunning beauty and grandiose entertainments.

Their reputation produced a steady flow of visitors keen to sample the delights of their northern climes, ensuring the protection of Praag would never be forgotten.

Their trade reflected this, too. Praag grain is sickly and in short supply compared to that of the southlands, and

the city has been starved out by the south more than once. To combat the cost of shipping essentials north, Praag fostered the craftsmanship and sale of luxuries and ornaments: gold, silver, and copper filigree work, set with precious stones, along with the finest furs and cloths stitched into stunning headdresses, shoes, jewellery, and cloaks. Soon, it was known by all that the best silversmiths, jewellers, embroiderers, tapestry weavers, clockwork makers, and cameo painters were found only in Praag. Many of these used ancient Ungol designs and techniques, unknown to the city folk of the south. Likewise, the High Pass meant Praag dealt in exotic goods from the far east, such as spices, jade, and ivory. The money from this trade soon paid for the city's key attraction: the great Opera House. It was soon followed by an Academy of Music and an Observatory, all of which had the boyars of the south clamouring to visit. Wizardry was encouraged also; in the days before the Colleges of Magic in Altdorf, Praag was the centre of the Old World for magical and alchemical experimentation, and many legends are told of strange spells working amongst its streets.

Of course, such prosperity was not kept without a struggle, and Praag is a warrior city, as well as a poetic one. Over the thousand years of its life, the city has endured countless attacks, including ones from the armies of the southern capital. Praag's large Ungol population and proud independence has led the city to attempt secession on no less than three occasions. After the third, the Tzarina displaced Praag's rulers (dubbed the Z'ra) and appointed her own agent over the city, but the rebellious spirit lives on.

Most of Praag's military engagements have been against the forces of Chaos from the north. Against these, Praag raised huge, viciously spiked walls called the *basta*. Within these is a second wall, barely a yard away, peppered with murder holes to deter invaders. Both layers are carved with Dwarfen

runes of protection and are said to contain ancient magic, though none living know what they might be. Behind these defences, more walls surround the original city, now known as the Old Town. And on top of that stands the massive cannon-studded fortress, perched on a rocky spur like a massive, misshapen gargoye.

"It is a city lost in memory, somehow caring less for the damage done to it than for the wonder it once was. I am grateful I have seen such beauty before I die, even if that beauty is cast as if through a fractured glass."

—FRIAR BEGEL, "MY JOURNEYS IN KISLEV"

"Horrible place. Half ruined. Rife with plague. And it smells funny. They have gold, though."

—FRANZISKA HEDENGELT, DWARF MERCHANT



The city also has spaces within those mighty walls to house peasants and nomads from the surrounding countryside that inevitably flee to the city when the Chaos powers descend. Thus, Praag is a constant jumble of races, with a Gospodar ruler, Ungol boyars, oblast folk, steppe nomads, Empire wizards, traders from Cathay, and even remnants of the Ropsmenn in the Old Town. Racial division is common but is dwarfed by the Praager's need to unite against both the threat from the north and the presumptions of the south. Praagers have a reputation for being paranoid and insular, and it is somewhat deserved. Praagers do not trust anyone who is not from Praag, for those who do not live there cannot truly understand what that life entails. For many, being a Praager is more important than being a Kislevite.

Withstanding the endless sieges and incursions has caused, on top of the immense loss of life, great destruction to the city's beautiful buildings. The citizens of Praag never forget the bloodshed but are relatively blithe about the destruction of their city—it presents an opportunity to redo the work in an even grander and more startling fashion. Once, there was nothing Praag could not endure and simply rebuild anew.

Then came the Great War of Chaos.

The gigantic army of Asavar Kul headed south, determined to destroy the realms of men, and their fury fell first and foremost upon the city of Praag. The great basta held strong, the soldiers of the city were brave beyond sanity, and the siege lasted months, until the twisted corpses of the Chaos army were piled to the tops of the walls. But the tide could not be held back forever. The walls fell, and the Citadel was

abandoned. Balefire burned down the palaces, Dark Magic roared through the houses, and Chaos reigned in the streets. Thousands were slaughtered or driven into the freezing snows, and they were the lucky ones.

The survivors crawled back to find their city in ruins—and worse. The armies of the south burned what remained to the ground in an attempt to cleanse it, but the Chaos-taint had been driven deep. The walls sprouted monstrous eyes and tongues, men and silver were melted into one, and a rain of severed fingers fell every day around the Fire Spire. Black blood ran from all the wells, and carpets of living, moaning flesh slid across the surface of the river. For years afterwards, every second child was born a Mutant, and it was a century before birds were heard in the sky again.

But the people of Praag would not abandon their city. Instead, they rebuilt it, piece by piece, with whatever they could find. To this day, the city has a haphazard look, structures unfinished or approximated around scars and open wounds still unhealed from the devastation. Then came new invasions and fresh destruction. The walls were broken down once again two hundred years later, and Praag was not spared the fury of the Storm of Chaos a few decades after that. In the face of such unrelenting suffering, many gave in to despair. Repairs began to be forgotten, desolation no longer reclaimed. Some abandoned the city; others stayed and waited for death to claim them. Still more feed like ravens upon its sickly, lawless streets. And Chaos rises: the laneways of the New City swallow the souls of those who walk them, the dead will not sleep in their graves, and restless spirits haunt the ruins of the gutted spires.

But still, the pride of Praag lives on. Food and medicine is brought from the south in great wagon-loads. Brave men hold back the walking dead and the hungry Mutants that emerge from the tainted areas, and refugees from the stricken streets carve a place to live in what buildings remain. The silversmiths create filigree wonders once again, and the merchants turn trade once more, though scaled down. The druzhinas throw as lavish parties as they can with their meagre supplies, and the women of the solitary Temple of Salyak do their best to cope with the unending tide of the sick and dying. The opera once again is full of song, though it is a sad, mournful song of a city that knows true horror. The city is cursed and makes no pretence otherwise. But this cursed city is still their city, and the people of Praag are quite prepared to die with it, if they must.

THE SHAPE OF THE CITY

Praag has a number of quarters and districts as follows.

GATES AND BRIDGES

Praag's monstrous walls have three gates. To the south is the Water Gate, which allows both boats and road traffic to enter. To the east is the Mountain Gate, where those heading to the Worlds Edge Mountains depart. To the north is the Gate of Gargoyles, named for its numerous, vividly carved waterspouts. When the forces of Chaos blew down the north gate, the gargoyles faces became horrifically mutated. It is said to be very bad luck to look up when passing through the Gate of Gargoyles, for if the tainted faces of the gargoyles catch your eye, they will feast upon your soul that very night. Whether the tale is true or not is unknown, but those who glance from the corners of their eyes have noted the number of gargoyles on the gate is never the same.

The southernmost bridge is called Karlsbridge after Z'ra Karl the XII, the ruler who led the first secession campaign against the tyranny of the south. The bridge is wide enough for two carriages to pass alongside and is flanked by elaborate stone towers of Dwarfen design. To the north lies the Empty Bridge—or the Bridge of Death. The latter name comes from the fact that it used to carry the men of the Old City across to the Citadel to become soldiers. The former name is Kislevite irony, for the bridge is never empty. Anyone who crosses it at night feels as if he is being followed. Looking behind reveals a figure cloaked in shadow that keeps coming nearer, yet never catches up.

THE OLD TOWN (STAROGRAD)

The area inside the original walls of the town is filled with the oldest buildings, packed haphazardly into tight, winding streets that all too often lead nowhere. Due to the protection of a second wall, the Old Town was spared the true horror that has consumed Novygrad but still suffered destruction and bears the marks of Chaos. Rebuilding is slow but constant; shiny new houses mingle with those from centuries ago—modern design is found next to the thatched roofs of the Ropsmenn ghetto. Once, these streets housed Praag's craftsmen, but as the

city expanded, such things moved south, and the traders here turned to more exotic goods. Here, you will find the sellers of proscribed books, magic ingredients, and foreign wonders. Here, too, are the more exotic bordellos, the more specific drug dens, and the more presentable victims of mutation and madness. In the tiny street-corner cafes, men of the Old Town sing songs from better days, drink strange Cathayan beverages, and wait for the taint to kill them.

NEWTOWN (NOVYGRAD)

The area immediately surrounding the Old Town to the north and east has been known as Newtown since it was constructed eight centuries ago. Its closeness to the north gate meant that its narrow, densely housed streets were the first and hardest hit of the entire city, and no rebuilding can reclaim it. Only the poorest of the poor live in these streets, for the sickness kills too quickly, and the Sunworms and Chaos Slime get the rest. The drains are scabrous sores that ooze stinking liquids, and the sickly air chokes with insects spawned endlessly from the piles of mutated corpses. The wind whispers murderous thoughts, and the muddy streets are full of deadly quicksand. The law will not follow criminals here, but only the desperate or the most perverse stay long. Cultists and rebels can meet safely amongst the ruined streets, but they too leave quickly lest the price is too high—the streets could shift, and they might never find their way out. Occasionally, controlled fires and demolitions are carried out in the quarter, but the taint remains, and most residents of Praag have accepted it.

THE DEEP CITY (GLUBOGRAD)

Although not on any map, everyone knows there is a city underneath that which lies on the surface. Praag is very old, and its Dwarf population built tunnels from the very beginning. More famously, during the time of Z'ra Zoltan, the area under the Citadel and the Old Town was filled with vast catacombs on the idea that when the walls broke, retreating underground might be the only escape. The catacombs were never used, but apparently, great war machines and sorcerous defences were constructed and cunning devices installed to provide sun and water and food in case a siege ever lasts for years again. Z'ra Zoltan's ice witch, Walpura, also built a great laboratory below, and legend has it she discovered some Dark Magic source far beneath the city. In the devastation of the Great War, however, all entries to the true Deep were lost, and nobody goes far below any more. Deep down, the great secrets of Praag may be waiting to be discovered, but right now, survival is more important than secrets.

THE NOBLE QUARTER

The south-eastern corner of the city has always been the area most spared from the depredations of war and Chaos, and thus it has become the area of residence for the richest and most ennobled of the city. Here, too, sits the Opera House and the Great Museum, as well as the massive expanse of Windlass Square, the staging area for all the greatest celebrations and most elaborate masques. The druzhinas do not pretend the war did not happen or that their city is not suffering, but they do

believe the spirit of Praag should never be diminished even in the face of destruction. Thus, the pageantry goes on, and art, music, and poetry remain the focus of life. Here, the madness of Praag lives large in indolent eccentricity and inveterate decadence, regardless of the cost.

THE MERCHANT QUARTER

Between Windlass Square and the Lynsk lies the Merchant Quarter. It is packed with warehouses, guild houses, docking ports, markets, and storefronts and is constantly crowded, even after dark. Among the silversmiths and craftsmen that made Praag so famous are also tanners and furriers, grocers and bakers, farmers and peasants, and silk merchants and spice caravans, all seeded with barkers, agitators, conmen, foreigners, and Dwarfs. Nomad and steppe folk add a rustic feel as they sell their beasts, flesh, and hides in the open squares. Ogres are also common, as many find work as guards on eastern caravans. Business has been subdued since the Storm, but nothing can stop the merchants of Praag. Things have become even more chaotic, as hundreds of refugees from the north of the city have taken over the abandoned warehouses and port stations as their new homes. Some merchants view these newcomers as vermin who must be exterminated, others as just highly motivated customers. Lives are now bought and sold like meat on those narrow

streets and for far less money. Organised and petty crime abounds, and the beleaguered and corrupt men of the Dock Watch have neither the manpower nor the inclination to do much about it.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

If Praag is anything, it's colourful. There is a myriad of shops, curiosities, restaurants, and vice dens for those who know where to look, and those who don't can hire the services of a sharp-tongued urchin or suspicious riddle-man (city guide) to help navigate the labyrinthine streets of the city.

1. The Old Town Hall

Very little in the Old Town fits its name any more. The Alleyway of Sighs contains bookstores, and Slaughter Square holds a café. The Old Town Hall has also changed its function—the lofty, many-roomed building now acts as the city's sanatorium. A saying goes that something unnecessary is like bringing a madman to Praag, and it is true the city has far more than its fair share of the mentally afflicted, both inside and outside the Town Hall. The sanatorium is a more relaxed environment than a typical Empire institution: inmates are permitted to read, paint, play music, and even continue their experiments, though most prefer instead to

THE PRAAG AFFLICTION

Living in a city so tainted by Chaos weighs heavily on the mind and body, even for those who escape mutation. Characters who come from Praag may, at their option, gain one of the following Afflictions at character generation, gaining an additional Fate Point in return.

TABLE 8–I: THE PRAAG AFFLICTION

Roll	Affliction
01–10	Absent-Minded: You never seem to remember things you're sure you know. You suffer a –10 penalty on all Common Knowledge Skill Tests.
11–20	Added: You're not quite right in the head. You begin the game with 2 Insanity Points and an affectation to match.
21–30	Clouded Vision: A milky liquid swims in front of your eyes. You suffer a –20 penalty to all Perception Skill Tests that involve sight.
31–40	Club Foot: One of your feet is a twisted, shrunken mess. You can walk fine, but you may never take the Run action, and your maximum Leap distance is halved. You may never acquire the Fleet-Footed Talent.
41–50	Frail: You begin the game with two fewer Wounds than you rolled for your starting profile.
51–60	Jumpy: You are easily spooked. You suffer a –10 penalty on Fear and Terror Tests.
61–70	Poor Hearing: Due to a loud noise or birth defect, you have trouble hearing properly. You suffer a –20 penalty to all Perception Skill Tests that involve listening.
71–80	Sickly: Your poor constitution means you catch every disease that goes around. You suffer a –10 penalty on all Toughness Tests to resist disease and poison.
81–90	Stutter: Your speech impediment makes it difficult for others to understand you. You suffer a –10 penalty to all Gossip and Speak Language Skill Tests.
91–100	Weak-Minded: Your mind is not as strong as others. You must check for a disorder once you possess 5 Insanity Points, and you automatically get one when you acquire 10 Insanity Points.

babble about the dark things only they can see. Some of the greatest minds of Kislev end up inside its walls—boyars, witches, generals, even members of the chekist. Those who have the time to sift through these madmen's babble may discover a treasure-trove of state secrets—if they do not go insane from it first.

2. The Street of Shifting Signs

Before the Great War, this street was home to grocers who scrawled their wares and prices on the slate in chalk every morning. On the other side of the wall was the home of a mad old seer who kept vast diaries of what he claimed were visions of the future. True or not, in the fires of Chaos, one place leaked into another, and now, every morning, the slate signs write their own messages. Mostly, these are nonsensical random combinations, but many believe the words can and do tell the future, if one knows how to read them.

3. The Citadel

The defensive bastion of Praag is an imposing fortress across the river. Its lead-lined, rune-scored defences bear countless scars of war, but the structure remained solid. Its cannons still function with loud and terrible force, and pulks still barrack within its walls. Its stone exterior is carved with bestial gargoyles to match the gate opposite, adding to its grim appearance. Perched up so high, it casts a dark shadow over the streets and provides visitors with all the evidence they need that Praag is a haunted city.

Beneath the Citadel is the Square of Kisses, where the armies assemble. It is still used for this purpose but only during the day, for at night, it rings with the maddening screams of the thousands of men who died there when the north gate fell. This supernatural phenomenon has the added benefit of deterring soldiers from leaving the fortress to seek out kvas and women across the river. Many songs have been written about brave young esauls dashing for the Empty Bridge to see their paramours on the other side. Like most Kislevite songs, they do not have a happy ending.

The Citadel has many uses beyond just defence. During the Great War, it was the default palace for the boyars, and with the destruction of the Fire Spire, it became an impromptu residence for the ice witches and other mages. To this day, its towers maintain this functionality, so one may pass through a soldier's barracks, a stately bedroom, and an icy laboratory

while ascending a single staircase. Finally, the Citadel also functions as a Watch House. Soldiers serve as watchmen for a season at a time. However, the soldiers are mostly southerners, installed to quell rebellion, as well as protect the city. As such, they are not respected by the townsfolk, nor do they take their roles as watchmen seriously.

4. The Grand Parade

The main street of Praag is one of the widest in the Old World and was once one of the most beautiful. The fully cobbled thoroughfare runs from Karlsbridge to the Mountain Gate. From there, it connects to the trade road to the east, which leads through High Pass to the Dwarfen kingdoms and beyond. Once, the Grand Parade was literally paved with silver. Now, every single night, thick, putrid blood seeps up from between the stones and stains the cobbles black. At dawn, the Parade is filled with the swishing of the swabs, men employed by the city to mop up the blood before the day's trade begins.

5. Windlass Square

To the south of the Parade sits Windlass Square. Its name comes from the giant windlass that lies halfway along its length. Before the Great War, this mighty steam-powered crane was used to lift cannons and munitions from river barges into the Citadel. That a hundred-ton iron windlass could be lifted from the riverside and smashed through the cobbles on the other side of town is just another outcome of the Great War that the people of Praag have learned to accept. Windlass Square runs uphill to the great Opera House and the New Palace. In keeping with Praag fashion, it is oft-debated which of the two buildings is the more beautiful—and the more important. Events held at either building always spill out into the square, making it the most fashionable place to be and be seen. The nobles of Praag live around the square, and rank in the city is said to be measured by how loudly one can hear the opera from one's bedroom.

6. The Opera House

The Praag Opera House is not unlike the city in miniature: the scars and ruin of the war are proudly borne between the beauty and extravagance of the rebuilding and defiantly aesthetic in the face of decay. The vaulted ceiling inside the grand, baroque building still preserves the hole struck by cannon fire, and the stalls are decorated with the bones of the dead, forming macabre yet undeniably beautiful patterns. The acoustics on

THE OPERATIC SOCIETY

The Opera House is funded partly by the opera companies, partly by the duke, but mostly by the Operatic Society, a loose collection of the city's wealthiest boyars who believe fervently in the promotion of great music. They also passionately believe in protecting their power and their incomes, and the prosperity of Praag ensures both. They are the true rulers of the city, and they manipulate every part of it to ensure trade continues without undue influence from the south and that profits—their profits—remain high. Such profiteering chafes the boyars and guildmasters who are not members of the Operatic Society. They would pay handsomely for anything that helps weaken the society's position—or, alternatively, anything that permits them to join. With almost half the society dying in the Chaos Incursion, such social mobility is suddenly a lot more likely.



THE VAMPIRES

The citizens of Praag would not be surprised to hear there are Vampires in their midst, but they would be terrified at just how far and deep their influence reaches. The Vampire taint is upon many of the great boyar families, most notably the Upirnovs, the Vasilikovs, and the Kalashiniviks. The Vasilikovs claim to be directly descended from Vashanesh, one of the original Vampire princes, while the Kalashiniviks are Lahmians, of the same bloodline as the crazed Vampire Tzarina of centuries ago, who thus declare themselves the true heirs to the throne. The Upirnovs are not aligned and keep the others' feuding from becoming outright war. The Vampires also control a great many other boyars, druzhinas, and merchants who, though not Undead, have come under their spell.

For much more on Vampires, see *Night's Dark Masters*.

stage are phenomenal, and to play here is an entertainer's dream, the equal of appearing at the Breughel in Altdorf. The Opera House is a symbol of great pride to both the rich and poor of Praag, and every person in town has attended at least once, thanks to the annual performance where everyone is allowed in for only a penny. Since this yearly event fills the halls with peasants, or *muzhiks*, these events are known colloquially as *muzhik-bals*.

All great Opera Houses have a ghost, and Praag's is no exception. Everyone knows that the great pipe organ plays even when the building is empty. However, it is not being played by just any rogue spirit; the organ is tainted with Dark Magic and corrupts any who play it. Anyone spending a season as the Opera House's organist gains one Insanity Point and feels driven to commit lustful and violent acts. The long run of the Opera House organists who have gone mad or been arrested has been noticed, but such is the price of great music.

7. The New Palace

After the third attempt by Praag to secede from its southern rival, its Ungol rulers were permanently replaced by a Gospodar representative of the Tzar, answerable only to that power. This individual has the title Duke of Praag and resides in the New Palace. The choosing of the duke is difficult, as a Kislevite loyalist will be uniformly despised by his people, while a favourer of Praag will defeat the purpose of the position. The newly appointed Duke Ivan Valeriki Kolarabinikov is well-thought of by the noble classes because, although he has no great military distinction, he makes almost no effort whatsoever to get involved in politics. The exception is his dedication to maintaining his popularity among the lower classes, and he not only pays for the help wagons but has been known to hand out the bread rations personally. He is also a great lover of art and fancies himself a painter. It is not unusual for a traveller through Windlass Square to discover half the royal household dressed as kossars at the Longest Charge, while the duke furiously dabs at his canvass. However, the duke is spectacularly awful at his chosen art form, and among the artistic circles of Praag he is secretly known as "Ivan the Terrible."

8. The Red Rose

The Red Rose is one of the most famous bordellos in the Old World, thanks to V.I. Tiodorov's play *The Strange History of Doctor Zhiekhill and Mister Chaida*. It is sometimes dubbed the "Second Stop" for visitors and soldiers; after they have visited the Opera

House or the barracks, respectively, most people wish to see this building before they leave. And just as the opera continues despite the city's troubles, so too does the Red Rose never cease its business—or its spirit of defiant decadence. The Red Rose provides a range of diverting spectacles for the visitor, their girls frequently skilled in singing, dancing, or sword-juggling, as well as the physical arts. The Red Rose is run by Madam Zorna, who is famous for her endless energy and fiery wit.

9. The White Boar Inn

Not far from the Red Rose stands the White Boar. This rough drinking establishment is similar to others frequented by sailors but with one important difference. Over the years, the Boar has gained a reputation as a hiring place for those desperate or foolish enough to leave the river. Since this means going east into the Dark Lands or north into Troll Country, such a prospect is almost certain death. Still, Praag is no longer safe, and adventurers are known for their desperation and foolishness, so the merchants who come to the Boar eventually find what they're looking for.

10. The Bow and Bard

The most expensive inn in Praag is famous for its small number of rooms—only thirteen. There are six doubles, six singles, and a tiny room that is always kept empty by the taciturn landlord, Tolya Tolyeviska. As the Bow and Bard is the best place to stay outside of the palace or the home of a boyar, an unspoken competition exists between lesser dignitaries over who is able to find rooms there. In the tap room below, the druzhinas and wealthy merchants mix with foreign visitors, and the Operatic Society frequently meets in the card rooms in the back. Nobody knows exactly how Tolya decides who will stay and who will be "bumped"—or why he leaves the thirteenth room empty—but these mysteries provide much discussion over the kvas and *samogon* (a crude moonshine).

11. Kalita's Favour (East and West)

Kalita, the God of trade has temples in his honour at the Water and Mountain Gates, though to the untrained eye, they look suspiciously like taverns. And they are, but they also contain alcove shrines to the silver-handed God. Both are right by the gates (the southern one even has direct access to the river), and it is tradition among traders to stop on their way out of the city and ask for a safe journey, while merchants often make

their final deals in the private rooms upstairs. All of this dealing greatly benefits the Vampires who secretly run the two taverns to keep track of almost every business deal in the city.

12. The Fire Spire

This imposing, narrow spire is still the tallest structure in Praag, despite losing its top two stories in the War. It was built as a magical college by Z'ra Rudolf II, who was fascinated by the magical arts and wished to gather all sorcerers to the city, be they ice witches, hags, or the strange wizards of the Empire. Traditionalist Ice Witches and Hags looked on in horror as, soon enough, the heights of the tower were bursting with Aethyric flames, arcs of frost-fire, and alchemical explosions, causing the townsfolk to dub it the "Fire Spire." However, the witches' vocal disapproval was soon proven wise for, during the Great War, the tower acted as a lightning rod to Chaos sorcerers and was forever twisted by Dark Magic. Now, the Fire Spire stands as a testament to the witches' warnings, for none who enter its haunted chambers return; but, even so, the promise of lost magical wonders continues to tempt desperate treasure hunters. The Fire Spire still attracts both natural and unnatural phenomena, and being near it during a storm is a very bad idea.

Although its inhabitants played a large part in defending the city during the Great War, the damage from the exploding spire and the remaining Chaos taint are forever associated with magic and its practitioners in a very negative way. Ironically, this prejudice—coupled with the large Ungol population and the risks of spellcasting (see sidebar)—means there are almost no ice witches in Praag. Hags are welcome, but none step onto its tainted soil unless they absolutely have to, leaving Praag almost entirely empty of spell casters (apart from travelling Empire wizards seeking some lost lore). But the hags know that the city is not defenceless: they can sense that some deep power, perhaps the Ancient Widow Herself, watches over the city from below, though why and to what extent remains unknown.

13. The Old Palace

During the Great War, the original palace was destroyed by Warfire strikes, and Z'ra Zoltan was forced to relocate. Since then, there have been seven attempts to reclaim its shattered hulk. Every single time, the structures burned down soon after being erected, and those working on them died or went mad. Even buildings built too closely to the Old Palace burnt or collapsed. Eventually, the people of Praag took the hint, and now, this gigantic black ruin sits like a dark spider upon the Grand Parade. Traffic diverts in a wide arc around it, and people make the sign of Dazh if they walk near it. On one wall,

a terrifying silhouette of a young girl has been somehow burnt into the stone. Many different ideas exist about her identity and her fate. Some say her cries can be heard on Weeping Day, and some say it is her blood that constantly seeps into the Parade.

14. The Magnus Gardens

Across the Karlsbridge is one of the city's few oases from suffering: a large park named in honour of Magnus the Pious. Although the Emperor-knight did not personally relieve the city, they are aware of the great work he did in the south (and would be loathe to put any Kislev general on a pedestal). Unlike the gardens in the capital, no magic is used to preserve this area, only an army of extremely zealous gardeners who persist with their work despite everything the city has suffered. In winter it is barren and bare, but that does little to harm its beauty. The Magnus Gardens also contain many marvels amongst its winding paths and narrow streams. At the gates, there is a statue of its namesake, around which the townsfolk gather on Weeping Day. Further in is the old Celestial Observatory, now abandoned, and beyond that stands the Academy of Music and the College of Art, both still accepting students into their small but stately chambers. To the south is a large, forested area that houses the Temple of Ursun, and there are other follies nearby with remembrances to Dazh, Tor, Ulric, Taal, and Salyak.

15. The Temple of Dazh

The Temple of Dazh's Blinding Luminescence—to give its full name—sits high on the hill by the Citadel. This massive temple rivals the one in Kislev in both size and opulence. Like all temples to the sun God, it is a circular structure open to the sky and filled with golden images of their chosen deity. Unlike most temples to Dazh, its exterior walls are filled with fine stained-glass windows, depicting the God and his many companions and legends. It also includes what is known as the "Seeing Circle" in the centre. Here, the most devout priests sit at noon and stare at the wonder of Dazh above for as long as they are able. As a result, most of the cult leaders are blind. Andrya Uneslav is the current watcher, and he is famed for his unerring perception of people and sounds, despite his condition. It is said that if a pin drops in his temple, Andrya can tell you which way it is pointing.

Dazh has always been strongly favoured in Praag, and this fervour has only intensified with Kislev becoming an Ursun stronghold again. The passion of Praag's Dazh cultists is legendary and has given rise to both religious and political drama—religious in the case of miracles, such as the time Watcher Iablanik prayed for so long for food for his dying city

CASTING SPELLS IN PRAAG

Chaos is so omnipresent on the streets of Praag that even the ice witches may feel its sting. Anyone using non-divine magic within the walls of the city must roll an extra die. This die does not count towards the spellcasting total but does count for triggering Tzeentch's Curse, a Glacial Surge, or the Fury of the Spirits. In Novygrad, spellcasters must roll two extra dice in this fashion. If these two extra dice roll doubles, ice witches and hags suffer Tzeentch's Curse (at the level determined from all the dice rolled) rather than a Glacial Surge or Fury of the Spirits.

THE GIRL IN GLASS

There are many legends told in both the Empire and Kislev about a beautiful girl who will save the world from Chaos if only she can be freed from her glass prison. Some stories say the girl is the Goddess Shallya, others say she is the Vampire Genevieve (a fact she fiercely denies if in earshot). In Kislev, the most famous version is the one presented in Anton Denisovich's great opera *The Girl in Glass*. Here, the girl is the Goddess of Purity, her coffin buried under Praag, and she can only be freed by the kiss of a cursed Chaos warrior. He eventually does so due to his love for her, despite knowing she will destroy him when she is freed. The opera ends with the obliteration of the Chaos forces and the salvation of Praag and, thus, is enduringly popular in the city that has suffered so much. What is more, several unscrupulous riddle-men are playing upon this myth by offering people a glimpse of the real Girl in Glass, for a moderate fee. Any un-marred young woman visiting the city will be propositioned to join this scam, as finding appropriately goddess-like women who are prepared to lie for hours half-naked in a rusty glass box is not easy.

that he turned into a great apple tree and political in the case of several Watchers over the years being prepared to go head to head with boyars, generals, ice witches, and the duke to ensure the protection of the cult's interests. Most famously of all, the extremely stubborn Watcher Rak, Uneslav's predecessor, made history when he met with an ambassador from the Empire. The envoy made the mistake of suggesting—after a long discussion of Kislev's obvious weaknesses and need of the Empire's assistance—that Dazh was unnecessary, for those who were under Ulric's blessing need never fear the winter's cold. Rak picked up the large Ulrican and threw him head first through one of the enormous stained-glass windows. This event became known as the "Defenestration of Praag" and caused shockwaves throughout Empire-Kislev relations, some of which are still being felt, as is illustrated throughout the adventure in **Chapter X: Rough Justice** beginning on page 124.

16. The Temple of Ursun

A collection of great boulders marks the Temple of Ursun apart from the rest of the Magnus Gardens. Within this pile is a deep cave whose tunnels extend far below the frozen ground. Normally, this temple is open and welcoming, if rarely busy. Two winters ago, however, Chief Priest Urosh sent all his subordinates away except one and did not appear for Waking Day or any other ceremony. His temple falls into disrepair above him, but he will not leave his inner sanctum and talks to no one. The reason for his self-imposed isolation is that Urosh has been touched by Chaos, and he has grown a boar's snout and sprouted thick, sap-filled thorns from his arms and shoulders. His seclusion is partly because he knows he cannot let the faithful see their chief priest in such a state but also because he is ashamed, believing he has wronged Father Bear in some way and is being punished. Urosh is slipping into madness, and his assistant, Gyrna, is running out of excuses about his master's absence. Gyrna desperately needs help to get the chief priest out of the city, but who can he trust to keep the secret?

17. The Bleakness

At the far east of the town lies a large open area that was once used to bury the poor, graze livestock, and support refugee populations during times of strife. Since the War, no grass will grow there, and the dead beneath the soil regularly come back to the surface. A cloying green miasma hangs over the area most days, and moaning spirits call to the unwary. Nobody

goes there anymore, except adventurers sent on some fool's errand or necromancers. There is, for example, a mad priest in the Old Town who believes the loam of the Bleakness is touched by the Aethyr, and he pays well for wheelbarrows of the stuff to supply his "great experiment."

18. The Furnace

When it became common knowledge that the dead walked the streets, the people of Praag began burning their dead rather than burying them. This incineration is done in the chambers of a huge furnace that was previously used for firing cannon balls. The men who work in the Furnace also resemble ironmongers—large, strong men who have a habit of lacking eyebrows. As the undertakers of the city—and the watch being notoriously lazy and corrupt—it has fallen to them to deal with the Undead when they rise. Armed with their foundry hammers, the Furnace's men march through the streets at night, smashing any Skeleton or Zombie that isn't where it's supposed to be. Such work is dangerous to both body and soul, and the Furnace's men are desperately trying to get assistance from the Tsarevich Pavel Society or the Black Guard from Kislev in keeping down this menace.

19. The Salyak's Arms

Part flop-house, part hospital, and part orphanage, Salyak's Arms is an all-purpose service house for the sick, the wounded, and the destitute. It began as a massive traveller's inn, but a century after the Great War, it was purchased by a generous benefactor and presented to the Temple of Salyak, which stands nearby. The Arms still has the shape of a tap-house, and kvas is served in the large common area that doubles as the filled-to-bursting hospital. The square in front of the Arms also functions as the sole court for commoners in the city. Justice here is meted out as afternoon entertainment in full view of everyone, which ensures the fairness of the judgements. As the Arms is positioned across the Lynsk from the Merchant Quarter, anyone asking for mercy or justice amongst those mercantile streets is said to be "on the wrong side of the river."

20. Butcher Bigfeast's

Squatting behind unfortunate merchant houses in the West Side is a small, but very noisy, Ogre ghetto. Very few Ogres can

stand city life, but they sometimes need a place to stay until the next trade caravan heads west. They bunk in this area and dine at Butcher Bigfeast's hall. Previously a tanning house, the boiling pots are now used for cooking stew, and the long tables are filled with the roar of hungry diners. The serving sizes are immense, dining lasts for hours, and whole stanitsas are supported by Bigfeast's constant need for livestock. Rumours

abound that Humans are also on the menu, but Ballison Bigfeast and his staff—a proud Halfling clan—vigorously deny such accusations. Dining is broken up by plenty of violent brawls, however, and it is a place where Ogres can be Ogres. A sign on the door reads “No slims! No stunts! No twigs!”—and only a Human, Dwarf, or Elf with a serious death wish would break those rules.

— THE CITY OF KISLEV —

The city that was to become Kislev was founded over two thousand years ago as a small trading colony on the banks of the River Urskoy known as Pelzburg. It enjoyed relative prosperity in its dealings with the roving tribesmen, migrating Gospodars, and hardy merchants from the Empire. Despite being sacked several times in its history, its location made it certain to rise from whatever calamity befell it, much like the Kislevite people. The trading post of Pelzburg was occasionally attacked by invading Gospodar warbands from the east, and at some time during this period of uncertainty, it was renamed Dorogo, in honour of a great war leader of ages past. The city flourished like never before, establishing strong trade links with the Dwarfs and other nations of the Old World.

Dorogo was, unfortunately, razed to the ground when the great migration of Gospodars came over the Worlds Edge Mountains under the leadership of Khan-Queen Miska. Well aware of the prime location Dorogo had occupied, Miska immediately began rebuilding the city and renamed it Kislev before embarking on a long and bloody campaign of unifying the land in the centre and south of Kislev under her rule. When she declared the wars finished, she returned to the nascent city, though she was never to see it fully built. Miska's daughter named herself Tzarina of all the land of Kislev and declared that her capital would be the city of Kislev, where it has remained to this day.

Since then, the city of Kislev has prospered like never before, its trade links with other nations growing ever stronger, even stretching over the Worlds Edge Mountains to distant Cathay. As its influence has grown, so too has its stature as a city, and engineers and architects from all over the known world have come to Kislev to raise its temples, bridges, and city walls. Flavoured by the Kislevites' own distinctive customs that date back to the days of the Ungol chiefs and Gospodar nobles, Kislev has become a truly unique city; its culture is like no other in the Old World.

From the time of its founding as Kislev, the city has never been taken by an invader, not even during the dark winter of the Great War against Chaos or Archaon's latest incursion. Every

invader has broken against the city's walls, and the people of Kislev see themselves as the embodiment of all that is Kislevite: resolute, determined never to yield to an enemy, and possessed of an indefatigable sense of honour. Of course, visitors to the city may come away with a slightly different impression, as the city is—like many others in the Old World—suffering under the famines and wars that wrack the land. Beggars and cripples are the inevitable fallout from years of war, and Kislev has seen more than its fair share of battles and blood recently. Kislev's greatness is a shadow of what it once was, but its streets, known as *prospekts*, are always thronged with people from lands far away, and such is its bustle and energy that there is never a shortage of things to do and places to see.

THE GORA GEROYEV AND CITY WALLS

Standing on the banks of the River Urskoy, Kislev is built atop the *Gora Geroyev*, which means “Hill of the Heroes.” Originally a burial site for fallen heroes of Kislev, the red soil of this hill is considered sacred, and it is a source of fierce pride to the city's inhabitants that no enemy has yet breached their walls.

The walls of the city are tall; machicolations are cunningly wrought within the decorative gargoyles at the wall head, and smoke rises from prepared braziers on the ramparts. The precise construction of the protruding towers and gatehouses ensures every yard of rocky ground before the walls is a killing zone, covered by crossbows and cannon emplacements.

An attacker will pay a fearsome toll in blood to

breach the city's walls, as they are amongst the most steadfast defences of the Old World, at least the equal of Nuln or Altdorf. However, the base of the wall has a smooth, glassy look to it, as though the stone has vitrified under some intense heat. This appearance is a legacy of the Great War against Chaos when the hordes of Asavar Kul laid siege to the city and caused the solid stone of the walls to run like molten wax. A cobbled roadway winds up the Gora Geroyev to a wide bridge that crosses a deep ditch and leads to the westernmost gate of the city.

“The city rises from the oblast like a jagged spike on the landscape, dominating the countryside around it in a vulgar fashion that is only to be expected of this rude nation. The walls are high and impressive to be sure, but how high must a wall be before it becomes unnecessary? It seems that these Kislevites have built their walls higher than any I have ever seen, and the effect is, though impressive, somewhat gauche for my taste.”

—LETTER TO ALTDORF, ANDREAS TEUGENHEIM,
FORMER AMBASSADOR TO THE
COURT OF THE TZARINA KATARIN

THE CITY AND RIVER GATES

Four main gates allow pedestrians and horsemen into the city, one at each of the compass points. The westernmost gate is the Urskoy Gate, also known as the Gate of Heroes, for this is the gate through which the defenders of Kislev sallied to win the final victory against Asavar Kul in the Great War against Chaos. The southern gate is known as Tor's Gate, while the eastern gate is dedicated to Dazh, for it is the first to look upon the rising sun. The northern gate of the city is called the Zza Gate, for it leads to the north and beyond (which is the literal translation of *zza* and also the word the Kislevites use when they must talk of the nightmarish Realm of Chaos).

Each gate is constructed from studded timber banded with black iron and is warded with powerful enchantments cast by the Ice Queen to render them invulnerable to fire. Each gate is freezing to the touch, glistening with a sheen of frost, and the guards who man the gate are all equipped with thick gloves to open and close the gate. Each gate is embedded in a mighty gatehouse of thick stone and is protected by murder holes in the roof. No less than a hundred kossars man each gatehouse, and there are many hundreds more within shouting distance.

The city wall is also breached by two mighty river gates, which allow river traffic in and out of the city. Each of these gates is a vast, iron portcullis that is raised and lowered by means of a Dwarfen steam-powered windlass on the walls above. During the day, the river portcullises are left open, but they are both

shut at sundown and only opened again at daybreak. The mechanism of these portcullises is also guarded by detachments of kossars.

THE BRIDGES

Four bridges cross the Urskoy as it winds through Kislev; three are fashioned by the hands of men and one by magic. The first bridge is the Bachór Bridge, a plain, unadorned bridge of grey stone and little ornamentation that takes its name from the unruly men who work on the docks. This bridge marks the beginning of Kislev's docks, which are known as the Dokziema area of the city. It also effectively marks the territory of the various dockhands and stevedores, who run things in this part of the city with a ruthless, if crooked, efficiency. Any person of quality—or those who simply don't wish to be robbed or murdered—avoid the Dokziema area, for it is a nest of cutthroats and vagabonds.

The second bridge is known locally as the Blyad Bridge, due to the fact that at its northern end is Madame Katya's Quilted Palm, a house of ill repute. The bridge is of Dwarfen construction and is solid and embellished with many fine carvings; although in recent years, a wooden hoarding has been added to make it a covered bridge, perhaps to spare the blushes of the furtive figures that can be seen crossing the bridge on their way to Madame Katya's den of iniquity. Though there is sure to be someone who remembers the bridge's original name, most Kislevites prefer its current name.

The Dorogo Bridge takes its name from one of the old names for the city and is a magnificent ironwork bridge that allows



the great triumphal road of the Urskoy Prospekt to cross the river towards the Bokha Palace. Constructed in 2411 IC in a joint venture between engineers from the Dwarfhold Karaz-a-Karak and Humans from the Altdorf College of Engineers, the bridge has pneumatic pistons that allow its span to be raised and lowered from the northern bank.

The final bridge is known as the Queen's Bridge and is a glittering bridge of solid ice that spans the Urskoy before it reaches the eastern wall of the city. Created by the Ice Queen to replace the original bridge after it was destroyed by a lucky Hellcannon shot during the latest siege, it links the Koztowny area and the Merkantlny district of the city. It is a breathtakingly beautiful sculpture of ice that never melts, even in the height of summer, and though it is formed of ice, no footing is surer in Kislev.

THE SEWERS

Commissioned by Tzar Alexis and designed by the ingenious Empire Engineer, Josef Bazalgette, the sewers below Kislev are amongst the greatest engineering marvels of the north, effectively eliminating the scourge of cholera from the Kislevite capital. Mile upon mile of twisting tunnels extends in a labyrinthine maze beneath the streets like the tunnels beneath the Fauschlag of Middenheim; although, these tunnels are formed of bricks and mortar rather than from the natural rock. Hundreds of tonnes of Human and animal waste flow through the sewers below the streets of Kislev, carried through oval tunnels dug through the rock and earth of the Gora Geroyev to empty downriver into the Urskoy.

The sewers are known to be a haunt of those whose dealings are best conducted away from inquisitive eyes on the surface, and it is a well-worn expression in Kislev that when someone "stinks like a river of dung," they are up to no good or that goods are suspect. The original blueprints of the tunnel system may exist somewhere in the Bokha Palace, but if they do, none now know exactly where.

THE GRACKIZIEMA (THE LEARNED QUARTER)

The section of the city to the north-west is known as the Learned Quarter due to the number of religious buildings, literary types, lawyers, and scribes found here. The streets of this district are heavily patrolled by the men of the city watch, and the buildings are fairly affluent, though no where close to the wealth of the Koztowny area of the city. A great many scribes, officers of the law, and functionaries of the Tzarina make their homes here, and the many taverns and food shops are a hotbed of intellectual banter and debate. Many of the greatest Kislevite writers, such as Kostoy and Verbosk learned their craft here, and it seems that every second shop runs a printing press, inking the latest pamphlet from hopeful writers. In times past, revolutions have fomented here, and the Tzarina's agents keep an ear to the ground to watch for any overly vocal agitators or demagogues that harangue the crowds from the platforms in Heckler's Market.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

The following locations are but a sample of the sorts of places one might find in this grand city.

1. The Temple of Myrmidia

This building stands out in the streets of Kislev, for its architectural style is markedly different from the structures around it, more in keeping with the elaborate domes and spired roofs of Tilean and Estalian temples. The Temple of Myrmidia is a gathering place of warriors, and it echoes with tales of glory and the clash of weapons, for here a warrior may test his mettle before setting off to war. The building is crowned by a bronze statue of the Goddess Myrmidia, and her temple is hung with glittering swords of ice and carved eagles of bronze. Bas-reliefs of shields and spears adorn much of the exterior, as well as marble statues of great warriors from Kislev's past. Knights from the Order of the Winter Sun protect the temple, an order founded some years after the Crusades when a group of Knights of the Blazing Sun travelled northwards and paused in Kislev before riding to their doom in the Troll Country. A frieze of solid ice in the heart of the temple commemorates this noble sacrifice, and it has become customary for warriors setting off northwards to take a chip of ice from this frieze as a token of good luck. Thankfully, the ice grows back moments later, or there would be little left of the frieze!

2. Raskolnikov's

Known as a house of lively debate and intelligent conversation, Raskolnikov's is a place where the intellectual elite of Kislev come to meet and converse with like-minded individuals on matters of great import, such as news from around the world and their latest poetic offerings. Originally, this was just a residence where the intelligentsia would gather, but the owner quickly realised the commercial possibilities of such assemblies and began selling hot tisanes, wines, brandies, cigars, and sweetmeats. Now, Raskolnikov's is the equivalent of a tavern, though one of such highbrow sensibilities that the owner would not dream of selling ales or kvas. Those with new ideas to espouse or who fancy themselves writers come to Raskolnikov's to have their efforts read and critiqued by the great writers and poets who frequent this establishment. Evenings are always busy here, and on nights when the current favourites of Kislev read their works aloud, it's standing room only.

3. The Temple of Verena

In addition to serving as a holy building, the Temple of Verena serves as Kislev's official courts. Much of Kislev's justice is delivered here, and it is in the Temple of Verena that such official trials are held and argued. This massive building has a long, colonnaded front and is fashioned from white marble brought from the Apuccini Mountains of Tilea. A silver owl sits above the main entrance, which leads into an enormous hallway illuminated by hundreds of candles and tall, narrow windows. At the far end of the hallway sits a colossal statue of Verena, an owl perched on her shoulder and an open book in her lap. The many chambers that can be reached from this

hallway house many of the temple's clerics, courtrooms, and also its library, which, with the exception of the library of the Bokha Palace, is one of the greatest collections of wisdom and learning in Kislev.

4. The Writer's Rooms

A great many of Kislev's populace hail from the hundreds of villages that dot the Kislevite steppe, coming to find work in the city and earn enough to send back to their families. The Writer's Rooms initially began as a few educated men offering to pen letters for illiterate peasants to send word to their families on the steppe of their work, health, and daily lives. Of course, this communication relied on someone being able to read the letter in their home village, but often, merely receiving a letter was enough, even if the letter's recipient could not understand it. As the number of people coming from the steppe increased, so too did the need for a more permanent arrangement, and Tzar Alexandr offered a stipend to any man of letters who was willing to spend a period of time in the Writer's Rooms transcribing the peasants' news and reading them any replies. Over the years, the Writer's Room has grown in size and stature, acquiring neighbouring properties and knocking down walls. From the outside, it resembles a number of humble dwelling places, but inside, it is a warren of stacked papers, bookshelves, and writing booths. It also boasts an extensive library of correspondence that is second to none in its descriptions of the customs, history, superstitions, and legends of the steppe people.

5. Heckler's Market

The Heckler's Market, one of the two main marketplaces in Kislev, is known as such for the long stage at its western end where the city's more vocal demagogues can vent their spleen to stallholders and customers alike. Many of Kislev's citizens choose to come to Heckler's Market simply to watch and listen to these people, and the more outrageous the demagogue, the less likely he is to be pelted with rotten food. As well as a thriving market that deals largely in non-perishable supplies, such as leather goods, swords, arrows, saddles, and the like, this square is also where Kislev's justice is often meted out on the end of a noose, for the stage was originally built as a gallows. The laws of Kislev are complex, and justice is often quick and savage; verdicts delivered from the Temple of Verena are quickly enacted here.

6. Frica's Furs

For those travelling from the city, good fur is essential to keep the cold of the north out, and none are finer than Frica's Furs. At least that's what the proprietor of this shop—a tricky Halfling named Frica—would have you believe. He deals in animal furs, and most types of fur and fur-lined clothing can be bought or sold here, though Frica is a skilful negotiator who always seems to persuade his customer to part with far more money than planned.

7. The Gryphon Barracks

The most famous regiment of winged lancers are the Gryphon Legion. Born to the highest ranking nobles, these knights travel

far and wide and operate as mercenaries when not called to battle by the Tzarina. The regiment was founded as the bodyguard of Tzar Gospodar IV, and they became semi-independent after encountering a great many beasts of Chaos during an expedition into the Worlds Edge Mountains. Their commander at the time, Vladic Dostov, slew a griffon single-handedly and kept the beast as a prize. From then on, they took the name Gryphon Legion and have always worn wings made from griffon feathers on their backs. Their fortified barracks are home to almost a hundred warriors and have space to house a further fifty; the barracks are equipped with stables for horses, a mess hall, and training facilities. These deadly riders are ready to ride out at a moment's notice to defend their city, and despite the recent shame of one of their number being exposed as brutal murderer, they remain one of the most honourable warrior bands in Kislev.

8. Kossar Barracks

The kossars were an Ungol tribe who worked as mercenaries against the other Ungols at the time of the Gospodar invasion. The kossars had adopted a unique style of fighting with bow and axe that they went on to teach the Gospodar warriors. Nowadays, kossar regiments are a combined force of Ungol and Gospodar soldiers, trained and kept by the Tzarina as a standing Kislevite force. They are well drilled, being able to attack at range with their bows and then meeting the enemy in close quarters with their great axes. Each gate of the city has a fortified barracks that houses a detachment of kossars to defend it, and these grim buildings of dark stone can be defended for days against any attack.

9. Temple of Dazh

Standing at the edge of Geroyev Square (and squarely opposite the Temple of Ulric) the Temple of Dazh takes the form of a large arena that is open to the heavens and enables his worshippers to pay homage to their God under the sky in which he lives. The temple in Kislev is one of the richest of Dazh's temples and is dominated by a large gilded statue of Dazh. The air is wreathed in scented smoke from the hundreds of burning braziers and fire pits—which must never be allowed to go out—that are tended by the priests. With the Temple of Tor so close, the weather around this part of the city changes frequently, and thunder and lightning have been known to change to a warm, clear summer's day in the time it takes to walk between the two temples.

The priests of Dazh are clad in gold jewellery, and the more senior priests positively glitter with the precious metal. In any other city, such ostentatious displays of wealth would attract the attention of thieves and rogues, but no Kislevite would dare attempt to steal from this temple, for they know that it was Dazh who gave the secret of fire to their ancestors, and without that gift, the winters of Kislev would be fatal.

10. Shallyan Mission

After the Lubjanko (see **The Lubjanko** on page 85) fell into disuse as a place of healing, the disenfranchised Salyakarin Priests commissioned the Shallyan temple at Couronne for monies to construct a mission in Kislev. After much wrangling,



their request was granted, and the “Shallyan” Mission was built. Where the Lubjanko is a place of dying, the Shallyan Mission is a place of life, and those who are brought within its white marble walls invariably walk out again. Once a visitor passes through the modest gates of the mission, they enter into a pleasant courtyard garden with a fountain at its centre, and the cooing of doves fills the air. Herbs and medicinal plants grow in this garden, which flourishes all year round, no matter how severe the winter. Images of hearts and the Goddess of Healing and Mercy cover the walls, and on the left is the temple, a nondescript white building with simple pews and a pale statue of Shallya. Several chapels line the other side of the courtyard, and at the end are the infirmaries where the sick and needy are cared for by the clerics of Shallya, most of whom are female. No one is ever turned away from the Shallyan Mission, but anyone healed of their wounds or sickness is expected to place a coin in every Temple of Shallya they pass from then on. No matter its official title, most Kislevites stubbornly refer to the Mission as “The Temple of Salyak”, and there has been significant pressure from locals for the Shallyans to accept traditional, thus better, Salyakarin values.

11. Temple of Tor

Built on the edge of Geroyev Square, the Temple of Tor is built upon an artificially raised mound of earth brought from the wide, open steppes. As much as any building can be said to squat, the Temple of Tor squats in the shadow of the Bokha palace, its thick stone blocks carved from the peaks of the Worlds Edge Mountains. A heavy, timber roof studded with copper rods covers the interior of the temple, and no matter what the season, the skies above the temple are always dark and heavy with the promise of thunder and lightning. Often, bolts of lightning strike the temple, and when this happens, Tor’s priests see it as an omen of things to come, reading the future in the patterns of the blue fire that ripples through the walls of the temple. A massive silver statue of Tor dominates the temple, a hugely muscled, square-jawed warrior bearing a mighty axe with a haft of oak with which Tor cleaves the sky to create his thunderbolts.

12. Geroyev Square

The heart of the city, Geroyev Square is a granite-flagged open space with hulking iron statues of long-dead Tzars around its perimeter. The square is formed by ornate buildings of red stone with high-peaked roofs crowned with onion-domed towers and narrow windows. To one side are the Temples of Tor and Dazh, while on the other is the Temple of Ulric, but as spectacular as these buildings are, they are but pale shadows of the mighty structure that dominates the far side—the Bokha Palace. The grassed centre of the square is often home to a horse traders’ fair, and on most days, a wide corral is set up with scores of ponies walking in circles before a crowd of prospective buyers. Geroyev square is always busy and is a popular place for citizens of Kislev to stroll, meet, and exchange gossip and news. On the first day of each week, envoys of the Tzarina march through the square, ringing bells and loudly shouting news of foreign lands and issuing proclamations from the Bokha Palace.

13. Goromadny Prospekt

The Goromadny Prospekt is a long street that runs through the city for almost half a mile towards Geroyev Square at the centre of the city. The road was once a great triumphal way that saw armies marching along its length, but now it reeks of desperation, its glory long behind it. Despite that, it is still an industrious thoroughfare where all manner of business is conducted. Stallholders yell at passers-by, footpads sprint from their victims as limble beggars plead for a few coins, and painted whores hawk their wares with weary resignation from sunken doorways. Though the road starts quite narrow at the city gate, it eventually widens into a tavern-lined boulevard, thronged day and night with carousing men who sing martial songs and recall the glory days of Kislev.

14. Pulka’s Livery

Situated next to the Zza Gate, Pulka’s Livery is known throughout the city as a place where a horseman can be assured his mount will receive the best possible care. Indeed, it is often joked that the horses stabled here have a better standard of accommodation than many of their riders. Owned and run by a Dolgan named Obedai Pulka, any riders who are willing to pay his outrageous prices do so in the knowledge that their steed will be looked after, fed, and watered with the very best care. Pulka has an uncanny ability to take an exhausted beast and return it to its full strength by the time its rider returns. Some suggest that he uses unnatural means to do so, but such malicious gossip is likely based on his Dolgan heritage, of whom many are suspected of becoming a little too close to their horses.

15. Temple of Morr

Built against the northern edge of the city, the Temple of Morr is a gloomy, high-walled structure with many shrines to the God of the Dead built into the outer walls, so the living need not enter. Unlike the rest of Kislev, Morr is well-regarded, and even worshipped, within the walls of the civilised capital. Regardless of oblast tradition, the dead of Kislev are taken to the Temple of Morr, a gloomy, solid structure with broad doorways and ponderous lintels embossed with the symbols of the grave, where the bodies are prepared for their journey into the next world and buried in the Garden of Morr beyond the wall. The heavy scent of incense fills the air, and loved ones of the dead that can afford it often ask for a traditional Kislevite burial. This practice involves the dead body being tied to the saddle of a horse (bought from the nearby Pulka’s Livery), which is then driven into the wilderness of the steppe. But this tradition is frowned upon by most of Morr’s priests because it delays the dead from arriving in Morr’s kingdom and leaves the body prey to the spirits of the land that may seek to perform unnatural magic upon it. As a result, a number of the sinister Black Guard of Morr often ride out alongside the dead and ensure that the proper rites are carried out upon it once they’re far enough away.

16. The Bokha Palace

The mighty fortress of the Bokha Palace dominates the eastern end of Geroyev Square and rises in tier upon tier of white stone towers and colourfully festooned battlements that reach their



pinnacle as a great golden dome. One entire wing is fashioned from ice; its frosty battlements and glittering flying buttresses shimmer with Ice Magic, and on a sunny day, its beauty is breathtaking, resembling a vast ice sculpture rising from the ground. Armoured knights with helms crafted in the shape of snarling bears patrol the palace's perimeter at all times, and though the palace is exquisite to look at, its defences are every bit as formidable as the city walls. This palace is the dwelling place of the Ice Queen and is where foreign emissaries and her boyarin are granted audiences. The common people of Kislev will never set foot within the palace unless under exceptional circumstances, but once a year, the Ice Queen gives leave that they may promenade the cold paths of her Winter Gardens, where food and gifts are distributed to her people.

The interior of the palace is at least as impressive as the exterior, every ceiling supported on intricately carved columns and every wall covered in works of art or carvings. The palace's ice-floored vestibule has a great, vaulted ceiling, its surface a vast mosaic depicting the coronation of Igor the Terrible and a great chandelier from the time of Tzar Alexis hanging at its centre. Great columns formed from sepia-tinted ice, veined with subtle golden threads, and capped with fluted, hand-carved capitals support the ceiling. The walls are smooth, translucent ice, and numerous rugs from Bretonnia, Estalia, and Tilea are strewn across the cold floor. It is a vision designed to intimidate with its regal opulence.

The most famous portion of the palace is known as the Gallery of Heroes, which sits within the magically created ice wing of the palace. This gallery takes its name from the collection of paintings of the Kislevite Tzars that hang here, a living history of the ancient rulers of the land, containing portraits of Tzar

Alexis, Radii Bokha, Alexandr, and the Khan-Queens Miska and Anastasia. The Gallery of Heroes is one segment of a great, three-part hall composed of solid ice that glitters dazzlingly with pinpoints of reflected light from the glow of a hundred silver candelabras. On one side, the hall opens through a single, great arch and arcade of ice columns into a massive semi-circular room filled with tables that are forever set for dining.

17. The Hanging Fountain

Behind the palace and in the centre of the Koztowny district, the Ice Queen created a wondrous fountain of ice that hangs in the air and constantly sprays shards of ice crystals that shimmer in the light and tinkle musically as they spin. Each shard of ice sparkles like a diamond, and though there is no jet to spray the ice or bowl to catch them in, they magically disappear before they touch the ground. The beautiful fountain spins slowly in the air, rainbows of light arcing through the tiny, falling splinters of ice. This destination is popular with the wealthy citizens of Kislev, and they often visit on crisp nights, for the music changes with the seasons, and the patterns in the air are beguiling and relaxing.

18. The Winter Gardens

Raised at the same time as the ice wing of the palace, this icy garden is a wondrous demonstration of the Ice Queen's power. Everything in this garden is crafted from magical ice: glittering, diamond-like flowers and trees of frosted glass. Gravel pathways wind their way between a host of exquisite sculptures of ice—carved trees, exotic birds, and legendary beasts. In the Winter Gardens, it is always midnight, no matter the season or time of day beyond its icy hedges. Moonlight bathes the garden in a monochrome brilliance, the silence and sense of isolation a physical thing within this icy wilderness of dragons, eagles, and bone-chilling cold. The Tzarina's knights patrol the glittering undergrowth, and on certain days of the year, the Tzarina allows her subjects to enjoy the gardens.

19. Madame Biletnikov's Balalaika Shop

The balalaika is a popular instrument in Kislev, many of the most famous peasant folk songs having been written on it, and a skilled balalaika player will never go hungry where Kislevite men gather. At home, it reminds them of glorious tales of love and honour, and when in foreign lands, it brings a tear to the eye as they fondly recall the open steppe and the city they left behind. Madame Biletnikov makes a passable balalaika, but her real business is information gathering. Balalaika players find commissions through the shop, and they play in the parlours of the wealthy and influential elite of Kislev, where all manner of scandal, gossip, and intrigue are exchanged with no regard for the ears of a lowly balalaika player. The information is reported back to Madame Biletnikov, and for those with deep pockets and a pressing need to know what is being said in the homes of the wealthy, there is no better place to go than Madame Biletnikov's.

20. The Summer Gardens

In marked contrast to the Winter Gardens, the Summer Gardens are kept at a pleasant summer temperature all year

round, another benefit of having a ruler whose power is said to come from the land. Magical barriers separate the chill climate of Kislev from this balmy garden of pleasant greenery, colourful flowers, and decorative topiary. Here, the rich and powerful of Kislev take the air without having to mingle with the common people of the city. Situated in the heart of the Koztowny district, the edges of the Summer Gardens are patrolled by hired mercenaries to ensure that only those with the virtue of wealth actually get in.

21. The Korotovskiy Theatre

Kislevites love a rousing tale that speaks to their passionate souls, and the Korotovskiy Theatre, where the plays and grand spectacles of Kislevite legend are brought to life on the stage, is just the place for the wealthy. Run by the infamous tyrant, Vladimir Korotovskiy, this grandiose and opulent building has largely fallen into disrepair, its once grand architecture appearing to be overcome by a creeping frost that seeps from the nearby Winter Gardens. The inside of the theatre is deathly cold, but far from putting off potential theatregoers, it only seems to heighten its downmarket chic. All manner of theatrical events are put on here, and even travelling players may tread the boards in Korotovskiy's theatre. There have been numerous attempts to repair the theatre; many of its rich clientele wish to see it restored to its former glory (mainly because they don't like such a dilapidated building in the centre of the Koztowny district).

22. The Hammer of the Gods

For ceremonial occasions, many of the richer Kislevites enjoy appearing in armour or sporting a new sabre or black powder pistol. For such individuals, there is only one place to shop, the Hammer of the Gods, a blacksmith cum armoury run by Oleg Borodin—a craftsman who fashions the most incredible pieces of work. His smithy is on the banks of the Urskoy beside the Queen's Bridge, and it is a mark of how highly his work is regarded by wealthy Kislevites that they will stoop to visit his shop in the Merkantlny District to purchase a piece of his work. The prices here are steep, very steep, but the work more than justifies the price.

23. The Iron Maiden

Rather less ostentatious than the Hammer of the Gods, this smithy is owned by Saskia Dolgana, a thick-limbed, pretension-free woman of the steppes. Hailing from a village on the banks of the Lynsk, her father taught her the skills of the smithy, and when he died, it was Saskia that took over rather than her brother, who had ridden out to do battle with kyazak and never returned. Eventually, Saskia travelled to Kislev, and her sense of professional pride was outraged at the quality of work being done by the smiths there, and she resolved to show these soft, city dwellers how it should be done. Her stern manner and viper-like tongue have earned her the nickname of the Iron Maiden, a moniker that has stuck and is entirely appropriate. The work done in this large smithy is plain and functional, but every piece is stamped with an inscription that reads "warranted never to fail." So far, none ever have.

24. The Twisting Path

It is often said of Kislev that fortune tellers are ten a penny and never truer is that than in the city of Kislev. The Twisting Path is the name of a fortune-teller who dwells on the Koztowny Prospekt and entertains wealthy callers to tell their fortunes. None who frequent this oracle remember anything of their visit, save the fortune imparted for a palm crossed with gold. Over the years, suspicious hunters of the occult have tried to investigate the nameless fortune teller, but every such investigator leaves with a bemused sense that all is well and only the haziest recollection of what was discussed. As it turns out, most of the Twisting Path's predictions are so vague that it's hard to tell whether or not they're accurate, but despite that, there is never a shortage of people willing to pass through her doors.

25. The Reliquary of Blessed Alexei Urskoy

Standing proud at the end of the Urskoy Prospekt, the Reliquary of Blessed Alexei Urskoy is a tall, grey stone monastery consecrated to the heroes of Kislev. Within its thick, fortress-like walls lay the long-dead rulers of Kislev and its most heroic generals. The Ice Queen's father, the great Tzar Radii Bokha, is buried here, and a place has already been prepared for the Ice Queen when Morr's breath comes upon her. This massive, stone edifice was actually a sanctuary in the times when rulers of the city feared assassination, but now it is simply a mausoleum to the dead, tended to by loyal servants of the Tsars.

26. The Lubjanko

Following the Great War against Chaos, Tzar Alexis was horrified by the care the wounded soldiers had received and immediately commissioned the construction of a hospital against the eastern wall of the city. Too many men had died needlessly of their wounds, and Alexis had been determined Kislev would boast the finest facility for the treatment of injuries in all the Old World. For a time, the imposing Lubjanko building served to house those wounded and traumatised by the horrors of war, but before long, it became a dumping ground for the sick, the deranged, and the crippled. Entire floors are now dedicated to the process of dying, where the mortally wounded are left to rot away the last miserable hours of their lives.

The Lubjanko is now a magnet for all manner of dispossessed unfortunates; orphans, homeless, the diseased, the crippled, and the mad. All come to rest within its walls, and its black stone façade and high, spike-topped walls serve as a grim reminder of the fate of those who have fallen between the cracks. Mothers quiet unruly children by threatening to cast them within its brooding, nightmare walls and injured soldiers pray to the Gods that they be spared the Lubjanko.

Night around the Lubjanko is a time to be feared. The howls of the lunatics and dying within its fortress walls fill the air with their cacophonous ravings. As such, it is a shunned place, the derelict buildings and empty streets around it deserted, and even criminals do not frequent the echoing prospekts around

the death-house of the Lubjanko. Only those about some particularly dark business would dare the haunted shadows that gather about it, and even then, they hurry to complete their business rather than linger.

27. Urskoy Prospekt

A marble-paved triumphal road that Kislevite armies would march along to reach the Reliquary of Blessed Alexei Urskoy to deposit the honoured dead, the Urskoy Prospekt marks the border between the Merkantlny Quarter and the Dewastaziema, the poor quarter. It is a road little travelled these days, save to move between the districts, since it does not lead to a city gate. Neither end of the Urskoy Prospekt is particularly populated, for who wishes to live in the shadow of a house of the dead or close to the chill of the Ice Queen's palace? The majority of dwellings and businesses are clustered tightly around the middle of the road, close to the southern end of the Dorogo Bridge.

28. The Chekist Building

Most rulers have their own network of spies and informants, but none are as feared as the chekist of Kislev. The saying goes that what the chekist deem as law is the law. The fortress-like headquarters of Kislev's feared enforcers is a grim building surrounded by a high wall with only one entrance through a heavy black gate. Beyond this gate is a bare, cobbled courtyard and an austere, windowless building of grey stone with but a single black door at its centre. Within the building lies torture and death for the enemies of the Tzarina or those that conspire to worship the Dark Gods. Armoured in distinctive black uniforms, the chekist are universally dreaded by all citizens of Kislev, for once a person enters their lair, they are known as "disappeared" and will, in all likelihood, never be seen alive again.

Beneath the building, a narrow brickwork passageway leads down to the grim dungeons; flickering lamplight illuminates walls that have seen countless miseries and now bleed those horrors into the air like a curse. Flaking paint coats the walls, and old bloodstains are splashed across the brickwork. At the end of the passageway is a solid iron door with a mesh grille set at eye level that leads into the cells. Beyond this door is a wide, straw-covered gallery that stretches off into darkness, the brick walls pierced at regular intervals by narrow doors of rusted iron; the stench of stale sweat, Human waste, and fear hangs heavy in the air. To be consigned to the dungeons of the chekist is to be condemned to a short life of misery and death.

29. Empire Embassy

Situated behind the Temple of Ulric, the Empire's embassy sits just off the Urskoy Prospekt on a narrow street with high buildings to either side that shroud it in darkness. The street eventually leads into a wide courtyard with a bronze fountain at its centre that gurgles a froth of clear, icy water from a holy cup. A black, iron fence with a wide gate protects the embassy, and a pair of guards in the smart blue and red livery of Altdorf stand guard over the building. Under the ambassadorship of Andreas Teugenheim, the embassy was allowed to fall into disrepair, but his successor, Kaspar von Velten, returned the

embassy to its former grandeur, though he did not live to see the work finished that he had begun. A bronze bust of Ambassador von Velten sits in the courtyard of the embassy, and it has become something of a talisman to the soldiers stationed here to touch it to ward off bad luck.

30. Temple of Ulric

Standing opposite the Temple of Dazh in Geroyev Square, the Temple of Ulric is a massive edifice of white stone adorned with statues of fierce wolves flanking the black, wooden doors. The building is square and has a central dome, though there is little ornamentation on the outside. Within this massive structure are many priests' chambers and training rooms, for Ulric is a warrior God, and his clerics are expected to be able to fight. The temple was built on the site of a former Shrine of Ursun, something that almost brought the two cults to bloodshed (and there was plenty of friction beforehand) and resulted in the followers of Ursun declaring that they would not erect so much as a single cairn or standing stone within the city's walls. To the more devout followers of Ursun, the city of Kislev is a blasphemous place, and it is only a matter of time until the Father of Bears smites it with his wrath.

31. The Morning Market

Where the Heckler's Market deals in manufactured items, the Morning Market sells fresh fruit, meat, bread, and vegetables. Riverboats from the south unload their cargoes in the Dokziema, and it is only a short journey for fresh foodstuffs to reach the market place. The marketplace takes its name from the fact that all the best food is usually on display during the morning, and by noon, most of the freshest food has already been sold.

32. Fabor's

Famed throughout the Old World, the exquisite works of the master artificer Murtok Fabor are much sought after, and it is in the chill shadow of the Winter Gardens and the Korotovskiy Theatre that the master has his workshop. His clockwork contraptions, mechanical eggs, and lifelike automatons have delighted children and adults the length and breadth of the Old World. The secrets of their construction have baffled the most gifted members of the Altdorf College of Engineers as to their workings, some even going as far as to say that such things are impossible without the use of magic, which no self-respecting engineer would ever countenance.

33. Jewel of Kislev Distillery

On the banks of the River Urskoy, Jewel of Kislev is a brand of kvas exported to the Empire and lands beyond. Founded by Stola Ormanoff seven years ago—using an authentic family recipe for kvas—Stola has earned a reputation as a distiller of a quality drink that is rapidly being taken up by the wealthy nobles of the Koztowny District—even going so far as to be served at the interval during a performance at the Korotovskiy Theatre. Of course, many say that it is nowhere near as good as their own family's recipe, but such grousing hasn't stopped Jewel of Kislev from becoming Kislev's most popular drink of the moment.

34. The Ropsmenn's Head

Purportedly the roughest tavern in Kislev, the Ropsmenn's Head actually boasts a preserved head above the bar, though it is so shrunken and withered that it is impossible to tell whether or not it actually is a Ropsmenn's head or not. But few would disagree with the innkeeper, a foul-tempered Ogre female from beyond the Worlds Edge Mountains. No one who drinks here knows the Ogre's name; she is simply known as "Big Aggie." Brawls are a nightly occurrence, but the quality (and portions) of the food is so good (relatively speaking) that people keep coming back.

35. Urskoy Docks

The Docks of Kislev are a thoroughly disreputable area, filled with cursing stevedores, riggers, labourers, and whores. The language heard here would make a Marienburg slattern blush, and no one who wishes to stay alive dares to walk alone here after dark. Murder and thievery are the norm on the docks, and every merchant who unloads his vessel here does so as quickly as he is able and pays a substantial amount in bribes to the local thugs to ensure that at least some of his cargo reaches its intended destinations. The taverns here are amongst the roughest in Kislev, and more than one noble who thought it would be fun to "slum it" for a night has been dragged from the Urskoy the next morning and taken to the Temple of Morr.

36. Shrine of Manann

Perched on the Urskoy, the Shrine of Manann is a long, wooden structure that straddles the river and is decorated with all manner of marine symbols: a crashing wave, ships, and great monsters of the deep. Though not the sea, the river is as close as the priests in this part of the world will get. A five-pointed crown hangs over the river, and all boatmen who pass beneath it reach up to touch it as they pass to invoke the protection of the God.

37. The Crippled Eagle

Another rough tavern on the edge of the docks, the Crippled Eagle has been burnt down and rebuilt more times than anyone can recall, though its proximity to the river has saved it from utter destruction each time. As a result, each time the tavern was rebuilt, it was on top of the charred remains of the previous building, which imparts a unique aroma and darkness to the bar. In recognition of its continual revival, the owner, an unbelievably optimistic Tilean named Alessandro Navolas, painted the bar sign to represent a mighty phoenix arising from the flames. However, his artistic skills leave a lot to be desired, and most people thought he'd painted a crippled eagle, a name which—unfortunately for Alessandro—has stuck to this day.

38. The Worlds Edge

This tavern is so named because it is a traditional destination for soldiers or mercenaries beginning a journey over the

Worlds Edge Mountains who have come to quaff a last drink before leaving the city. It is no coincidence this tavern is built on the road that leads to Madame Katya's Quilted Palm, since there are other things a man might want to do before heading towards a region as dangerous as the Worlds Edge Mountains. Unusual for a Kislev tavern, the atmosphere is subdued, and no music plays, as the clientele is usually so maudlin about their chances of returning alive that such frivolity would result in a swift punch to the head. As a place where warriors and mercenaries are known to drink, the Worlds Edge is also a place where such men can find work. Those who have returned from the east often return to drink in the Worlds Edge, for such dangers often change a man, and many find they now prefer the sombre atmosphere of the tavern.

39. Dock Metal

This smithy is where those with fewer funds can find weapons, armour, and other metalwork items at a much-reduced price, though with reduced price comes reduced quality. Most of the work undertaken here is done for the dockworkers and boatmen that come in on the barges from the Empire and does not need to last. The prices are appropriately low, but the type of work done here is often shoddy and imperfect.

40. Madame Katya's Quilted Palm

One of the most infamous bordellos in Kislev, the Quilted Palm has enjoyed a remarkable upsurge in its fortunes recently with the departure of Vassily Chekatilo, the criminal who formerly ran most of the bordellos in Kislev. Many rumours about the owner, Madame Katya, are in circulation, some claiming she is of noble blood and others claiming she is a fallen priestess of Shallya (a claim that may account for her staff being the best cared for in the city, despite being so near the filthy docks and its even filthier inhabitants). For a reasonable sum, visitors can expect discreet enjoyment; although, as with everything in Kislev, you get what you pay for.

41. City Watch/Fire Watch

In each of the five districts of the city stands a fortress-like building of stone that has a thick, wooden door with narrow slits for windows. Each of these buildings is home to that district's watch garrison, the men who keep the peace in that district with iron-tipped cudgels and the authority of the law. In a city such as Kislev, such a task is as thankless as it is difficult, and though working in the watch-house in the Koztowny District is not as hard as working in the Dokziema, each presents its own challenges. Numbers vary, but around fifty men work in rotating shifts in each watch house. These men also serve as the fire watch, reacting to any warnings of fire, a deadly danger in a city as densely packed as Kislev.



CHARACTERS AND CAREERS

*"Through blood runs power of land.
Yha? If concentrate, can feel Ancient
Widow in every beat of heart, in every
breath. Kislev is land. Land is Kislev.
We are Kislev!"*

—BABA DOYA, HAG WITCH



From barrel-chested bear trainers to indifferent ice witches, from brutish chekist to grim-faced winged lancers, Kislev provides a rich array of different character opportunities. This chapter presents everything needed to create and play such a character.

To create a Kislevite character, you follow most of the same procedures as those set out in *WFRP*. Where the character creation system necessarily differs, guidelines and rules are presented in this chapter to help you create authentic natives from this harsh and wintry land.

— TWO TRIBES —

Kislev is a nation of two distinct peoples: Ungols and Gospodars. Although both tribes are Human, they are different in many ways. An overview of each follows, which should help you pick the tribe that suits you best.

GOSPODARS

The powerful and wealthy Gospodars primarily inhabit the southern areas of Kislev. Almost all of the ruling elite, including the Tzars and Tzarinas, come from Gospodar stock, and their language and beliefs dominate Kislevite society. In particular, the Gospodar Cult of Ursun the Bear is the most powerful religion in Kislev, influencing even most Ungol communities. Gospodar women, who are renowned throughout the Old World for their fair-skinned beauty, are afforded the same rights as men, which can be confusing to outsiders unfamiliar to such equality.

The Gospodars are a tall, imposing folk with fine features that can seem exotic and strange to foreigners. Their skin is usually pale, though those wandering the oblast will be as weathered as any Ungol tribesman, and their often-straight hair ranges from blue-black to reds and blondes. Some blessed babes are born with white or silver hair, which is believed to be a sign the land's spirits have marked the child for great deeds.

UNGOLS

The less-populous Ungols predominantly live in the north. Their settlements reach deep into the dangerous Troll Country, where they were driven long ago by the Gospodars. Nomadic krugs of Ungol horsemen wander the oblast as far as Black Blood Pass, and some have more in common with marauding kyazak than with other Kislevites. They are a spiritual people with a long and proud history, and they have their own language—though it is slowly dying out. Ungol women have the same rights as men, and some nomadic krugs are entirely matriarchal.

There is a marked difference between the noble Gospodar peoples in the south and their less refined kin in the north. Ungols, as a people, are squat and hardy, thick of bone and heavily muscled. Grown tough in the harsh clime of their lands, they are accustomed to cruel weather and can withstand all but the worst of storm. Ungols typically have angular features and heavy-lidded eyes. Their mouths tend to sit in a frown, giving them a taciturn cast to their faces. Ungols have swarthy skin, tough and leathery on their hands and faces, and dark eyes. Their hair is thick, coarse and almost always black. As the Ungols dwell nearest to the flesh-warping regions of the Shadowlands, many Ungols have mixed blood,



finding in their veins the blood of Gospodars and Ropsmenn, but also Norse and Kurgan. As a result, lighter colouring is not unknown and there have been more than a few Ungols with queer red hair and green or blue eyes. Indeed, with the ravaging tribes of the extreme north, many Ungols sport hair or eye colours, or even builds that are utterly unlike any of their kin.

OPTIONAL RULE: MIXED BLOOD

Many Kislevites have mixed blood and are not completely Gospodar or Ungol. If your GM agrees, you can play such a character. To do this, roll 1d10 for skills, talents, and each appropriate background chart. On a 1–5, apply the results as a Gospodar; on a 6–10, apply the results as an Ungol. The tribe you roll for skills is the tribe that raised you and is used when rolling your starting career.

Mixed blood characters are often targets for bigotry and racism and can have difficulty mixing with either Kislevite tribe. While this can create rewarding role-playing situations and provide strong motivation to strike out as an adventurer, it can be difficult for some players to deal with. Therefore, a GM should only allow a mixed-blood character if the entire group is comfortable with the challenges it might bring about.

KISLEVITE RACIAL FEATURES

Kislevites lead different lives than the citizens of Sigmar's Empire. To represent this, the Human racial features given in *WFRP* should be replaced with the following tribal features.

Gospodar

Skills: Common Knowledge (Kislev), Consume Alcohol, Speak Language (Kislevarin)

Talents: 2 random talents (roll on **Table 2–4: Random Talents** in *WFRP* (page 19))

Ungol

Skills: Common Knowledge (Kislev), Ride, Speak Language (Kislevarin *or* Ungol)

Talents: Very Resilient, 1 random talent (roll on **Table 2–4: Random Talents** in *WFRP* (page 19))

OPTIONAL RULE: PROVINCIAL FEATURES

Instead of using the basic Kislevite Racial Features, you may prefer to use the following Provincial Features. These use the same broad divisions of Kislev as **Table 8–5: Birthplace**, which are described in **Chapter VI: The Oblast** on page 51.

THE EAST

Eastern Kislevites gain the following skills and talents:

Gospodar

Skills: Common Knowledge (Kislev), Consume Alcohol, Speak Language (Kislevarin)

Talents: Provincial Expertise (Eastern Kislev), Warrior Born, 1 random talent

NEW TALENT: PROVINCIAL EXPERTISE

Description: You are deeply familiar with your homeland. Select a province or region within your native country. You receive a +10 bonus to all related Common Knowledge Tests.

OPTIONAL RULE: BREAKING THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

If your campaign takes place outside Kislev, you may replace one of your starting career skills with an appropriate Speak Language (any one). You may later buy the replaced skill with experience points and must do so to complete your starting career.

Ungol

Skills: Common Knowledge (Kislev), Ride *or* Trade (Mining), Speak Language (Kislevarin *or* Ungol)

Talents: Provincial Expertise (Eastern Kislev), Very Resilient, 1 random talent

THE NORTH

Northern Kislevites have the following skills and talents:

Gospodar

Skills: Common Knowledge (Kislev), Consume Alcohol *or* Intimidate, Speak Language (Kislevarin)

Talents: Menacing *or* Warrior Born, Provincial Expertise (Northern Kislev), 1 random talent

Ungol

Skills: Animal Care *or* Ride, Common Knowledge (Kislev) *or* Outdoor Survival, Speak Language (Kislevarin *or* Ungol)

Talents: Provincial Expertise (Northern Kislev), Very Resilient, 1 random talent

THE SOUTH

Southern Kislevites gain the following skills and talents:

Gospodar

Skills: Command *or* Haggle, Common Knowledge (Kislev), Consume Alcohol, Speak Language (Kislevarin)

Talents: Provincial Expertise (Southern Kislev), 1 random talent

Ungol

Skills: Animal Care *or* Gossip, Common Knowledge (Kislev), Speak Language (Kislevite)

Talents: Provincial Expertise (Southern Kislev), Very Resilient, 1 random talent

THE WEST

Western Kislevites begin with the following skills and talents:

Gospodar

Skills: Common Knowledge (Kislev), Consume Alcohol, Intimidate *or* Speak Language (Kislevarin, Reikspiel)

Talents: Provincial Expertise (Western Kislev), 1 random talent

Ungol

Skills: Animal Care *or* Outdoor Survival, Common Knowledge (Kislev), Speak Language (Kislevarin)

Talents: Provincial Expertise (Western Kislev), Very Resilient, 1 random talent

— BACKGROUND CHARTS —

These tables replace their equivalents in *WFRP*.

TABLE 8-1: HEIGHT

	Female	Male
Gospodar	5 ft. 2 in. + 1d10 in.	5 ft. 5 in. + 1d10 in.
Ungol	4 ft. 8 in. + 1d10 in.*	5 ft. 1 in. + 1d10 in.*

* If you roll a 10, add another 1d10-1".



TABLE 8-2: HAIR COLOUR

Roll	Gospodar	Ungol
1	White	Brown
2	Ash blonde	Red-brown
3	Blonde	Dark brown
4	Ginger	Sienna
5	Light brown	Sienna
6	Brown	Black
7	Dark brown	Black
8	Sienna	Black
9	Black	Blue-black
10	Blue-black	GM's choice

TABLE 8-3: EYE COLOUR

Roll	Gospodar	Ungol	Roll	Gospodar	Ungol
1	Pale grey	Grey	6	Green	Sienna
2	Grey	Hazel	7	Hazel	Black
3	Grey-blue	Brown	8	Brown	Blue-black
4	Blue	Dark grey	9	Dark brown	Purple-black
5	Amber	Dark brown	10	Black	GM's choice

TABLE 8-4: THE HAG'S CURSE

This table generates a Hag's Curse for Ungol characters. It is traditional for hag witches to mark Ungol births by cursing each child from doing a deed they perceive to be dangerous. A character's curse is typically minor and easy to avoid. However, if a curse is broken, the GM is encouraged to be inventive with the repercussions. Perhaps a spirit of the land is summoned? Or maybe the character suffers from a spate of bad luck? It is up to the individual GM to decide what fits his game.

Roll	The Hag Cackles Her Curse...	Roll	The Hag Cackles Her Curse...
01-05	<i>This child's fingers must never bear rings.</i>	56-60	<i>Never allow this child to be alone in the mountains.</i>
06-10	<i>The Land will not tolerate this child to sing while mounted!</i>	61-65	<i>White fur is banned from this child's life.</i>
11-15	<i>This child must eat no berry picked by woman's hand.</i>	66-70	<i>Never allow this child to clutch a babe.</i>
16-20	<i>Forever cursed, is this child, from cutting hair with a blade.</i>	71-75	<i>Cursed, is this child, to never skin rabbit, fox, nor bear neither.</i>
21-25	<i>I ban this child from swimming beneath Mórrslieb's light.</i>	76-80	<i>It must not be allowed for this child to wash when Mannslieb's abroad.</i>
26-30	<i>This child is cursed to never swear or curse!</i>	81-85	<i>This child must never mount a horse while the cock crows.</i>
31-35	<i>I curse this child from wearing black on festival days.</i>	86-90	<i>Never must this child disturb sleeping beasts with hands or feet.</i>
36-40	<i>It is banned for this child to sleep on any carpet made of wool!</i>	91-95	<i>This child can never wear charms of gold or jet.</i>
41-45	<i>Forbidden, is this child, from fishing when Dazh blazes.</i>	96-00	Create your own (with GM approval) or roll again
46-50	<i>This child must not contradict mother, grandmother, or any wise woman.</i>		
51-55	<i>This child must never drink from skull or horn.</i>		

TABLE 10-5: BIRTHPLACE

Your first roll determines where in Kislev you were born, your second determines the size of the settlement. A result of "City" means you were born in Praag or Bolgasgrad if you are from the east, Erengard if you are from the west, or Kislev if you are from the south; if you are from the north, re-roll any city result. For any non-city settlement result, you either choose an appropriate location from **Chapter VI: The Oblast** or roll on **Table 8-6: Settlement Name** and randomise the name of your birthplace. If you roll Expatriate, refer to **Table 8-7: Expatriates**.

Roll	Gospodar	Ungol	Roll	Gospodar	Ungol
1	The North	The North	1	City	Roll as a Gospodar
2	The East	The North	2	City	City
3	The East	The North	3	Large stanitsa	Oblast stanitsa
4	The West	The East	4	Stanitsa	Small oblast stanitsa
5	The West	The East	5	Oblast stanitsa	Oblast tirsia
6	The South	The East	6	Small stanitsa	Small oblast tirsia
7	The South	The West	7	Large tirsia	Military Outpost
8	The South	The West	8	Tirsia	Large nomadic krug
9	The South	The South	9	Oblast tirsia	Nomadic krug
10	Expatriate	The South	10	Military Outpost	Nomadic

TABLE 8–6: SETTLEMENT NAMES

This table generates random Kislevite settlement names. Each name has two elements. Roll for one of each, and combine them to create your settlement name.

Roll	First Element	Second Element	Roll	First Element	Second Element
01–02	Arvam–	–ala	51–52	Lebl–	–oko
03–04	Astr(a)–	–arla	53–54	Luch–	–ora
05–06	Bal(a)–	–avtra	55–56	Milkav–	–orod
07–08	Belgor–	–cirk	57–58	Mir–	–ov
09–10	Bor(o)–	–cyno	59–60	Morav–	–ova
11–12	Byl(a)–	–dora	61–62	Nekol–	–ovny
13–14	Chebok–	–ebya	63–64	Nov–	–ovsk
15–16	Chern(o)–	–eny	65–66	Och(a)–	–ovya
17–18	Cho(i)–	–enya	67–68	Ples–	–polve
19–20	Dahzs–	–esh	69–70	Pomez–	–ryeka
21–22	Dedog–	–esk	71–72	Radog(o)–	–rya
23–24	Dern–	–evo	73–74	Res–	–sara
25–26	Enis–	–evka	75–76	San–	–sin
27–28	Ems–	–grad	77–78	Sepuk–	–sk
29–30	Gers–	–hov	79–80	Smol–	–ski
31–32	Gor(o)–	–inski	81–82	Temn(i)–	–shenk
33–34	Hosch–	–itsy	83–84	Tor(o)–	–tra
35–36	Iar(o)–	–ka	85–86	Ugr(o)–	–unov
37–38	Iger–	–khan	87–88	Ursz–	–va
39–40	Kalinin–	–kij	89–90	Uvet–	–vic
41–42	Kam–	–les	91–92	Volt–	–ya
43–44	Konin–	–lev	93–94	Vit–	–yno
45–46	Kras(i)–	–most	95–96	Zhed–	–yper
47–48	Kysl(y)–	–ny	97–98	Zhid(i)–	–za
49–50	Kz(a)–	–nya	99–00	Zven(i)–	–zy

OPTIONAL RULE: EXPATRIATE KISLEVITES

Expatriate Kislevite communities can be found throughout the Old World. If your character is a Kislevite raised in another country, and your GM agrees, you can use the following rules.

Replace Common Knowledge (Kislev) with the Common Knowledge Skill appropriate to your place of birth. Further, you may replace one of your starting career skills with an appropriate Speak Language (any one). Any replaced skill must be purchased later with xp to complete the starting career.

TABLE 8–7: EXPATRIATES

This table provides a place of birth for expatriate Kislevites.

Roll	Nation
1	The Empire (Ostermark)
2	The Empire (Ostland)
3	The Empire (Talabecland)
4	The Empire (elsewhere)
5	Norsca
6	The Wasteland
7	Bretonnia
8	Tilea
9	Estalia
10	The Border Princes

TABLE 8–8: GOSPODAR NAMES

The Gospodars have used the same naming traditions since their records began. They have up to three names: a given name, a metronymic (a name derived from their mother's given name), and a surname (inherited from the mother). Some Gospodar families have long forgotten their surnames and only bear metronymics. In such cases, some create new surnames from the metronymic of especially honoured ancestors. Other families only ever use surnames.

To generate a given name or a surname, roll on the appropriate column of this table. If you wish to determine a metronymic, determine a female name and add “–syn” to mean “son of” or “–doch” to mean “daughter of.” It is up to you whether you wish to have a metronymic, surname, or both in addition to your character's given name.

Roll	Male	Female	Surname	Roll	Male	Female	Surname
01–02	Aleksandr	Aleksandra	Aisenyev	51–52	Mitri	Mishka	Mozorov
03–04	Alexei	Anastasia	Aznabaev	53–54	Nicolai	Natalya	Nikodoch
05–06	Anastas	Bela	Bondarenko	55–56	Novgo	Nadyezhda	Novosi
07–08	Antal	Beledna	Bukosky	57–58	Oleg	Nicolja	Olgavnuka
09–10	Beledni	Chagina	Chekatilo	59–60	Pavel	Olga	Ovinko
11–12	Boris	Darya	Chzov	61–62	Ptor	Orlenda	Polursunov
13–14	Boroda	Dazhia	Dazhdalev	63–64	Pyotr	Pavla	Pronin
15–16	Borodyn	Devora	Dzamvin	65–66	Radii	Svetlana	Putortin
17–18	Chagin	Elena	Ekomov	67–68	Sevhim	Talika	Rebikov
19–20	Dazhja	Evdokiya	Eltsov	69–70	Silvestr	Tamara	Rybkin
21–22	Demitirji	Evelina	Fedokova	71–72	Stepan	Tatiana	Shalaev
23–24	Dmirov	Fyodorya	Filypov	73–74	Sorca	Torlana	Skvortskov
25–26	Douko	Irina	Gavrilov	75–76	Tordimir	Tornaida	Synsov
27–28	Fyodor	Irisa	Golitsyn	77–78	Ursuni	Tsvetkova	Taalychev
29–30	Gaspar	Ivana	Harkovsyn	79–80	Vaja	Ursola	Tereskovna
31–32	Igyor	Kazimira	Iltchenko	81–82	Valantyn	Ursuka	Tyurin
33–34	Ivan	Katarina	Ipatiev	83–84	Valery	Warvara	Ulrikov
35–36	Kazimir	Lubova	Jakov	85–86	Vassily	Valentyna	Uritsdo
37–38	Kubah	Lukyana	Jelavic	87–88	Viktor	Vasalisa	Vdovyn
39–40	Kvetlai	Lusha	Kostina	89–90	Vitali	Viktoria	Verepaev
41–42	Lukyan	Makrina	Krasnyi	91–92	Vladimir	Yelena	Wuloshyn
43–44	Madorin	Matryona	Kudrov	93–94	Vlasi	Yevgenya	Yakushkin
45–46	Makari	Minodora	Lebedyenko	95–96	Yarogni	Yuliania	Zakarova
47–48	Maksim	Militsa	Lyakhova	97–98	Yuri	Yurina	Zinoviev
49–50	Mikhail	Mikhaila	Moroshkyn	99–00	Yvgeni	Zoya	Zubov

METRONYMICS

Kislevite metronymics take different forms beyond adding “–syn” or “–doch” to the end of a mother's name. Naming practices can vary geographically, and some individual families practice traditions that are as hoary as Kislev's long winter.

In and around Erengrad, for example, it is common to use the “Syn–” or “Doch–” as a prefix rather than a suffix. In some oblast settlements near the Worlds Edge Mountains, many families take their name from their grandmother (on the mother's side), not their mother, with “–vnuk” (grandson) or “–vnuka” (granddaughter) added to their grandmother's name. In Praag, many families add “–vdova” (widow) to their mother's name when their father dies. And in Kislev, the “–syn” and “–doch” is often shortened to “–yn” and “–do” or replaced by “–ich” or “–vitch”—a custom especially prevalent amongst noble bloodlines.

TABLE 8–9: GOSPODAR DIMINUTIVES

It is very common for Gospodars to use diminutives amongst friends and family. The form these pet names take can vary and often bears little resemblance to the original name. To randomly determine a diminutive, choose one syllable or consonant from your given name, and add an element from this table.

Roll	Element	6	–oshka
1	–a	7	–ta
2	–asha	8	–usha
3	–inka	9	–yan
4	–lenka	10	–yasha
5	–lka		

TABLE 8–10: UNGOL NAMES

Before the arrival of the Gospodars, the Ungols used unisex names with a descriptor used to differentiate between individuals, such as “Gurban the Strong” and “Gurban the Horsewife.” However, after almost a thousand years of Gospodar rule, this tradition has slowly eroded. Now, many Ungols use Gospodar names.

To determine an Ungol name, roll 1d10: on a 1–5, determine your name on **Table 8–8: Gospodar Names**, on a 6–10, roll on **Table 8–10: Ungol Names**. Ungol names are for men and women, something that never fails to confuse outsiders. Ungols do not traditionally use surnames or their equivalents; fortunately, as their names are now so uncommon, they rarely need them to distinguish themselves when mixing with others.

Roll	Name	51–52	Negan
01–02	Anatai	53–54	Nevniz
03–04	Artzyn	55–56	Noga
05–06	Baichu	57–58	Nyvena
07–08	Belgutai	59–60	Ogulai
09–10	Chaglyn	61–62	Osul
11–12	Chamuka	63–64	Puntseg
13–14	Dazhyn	65–66	Shirleg
15–16	Dorben	67–68	Suren
17–18	Eiyi	69–70	Syrtak
19–20	Erdai	71–72	Tabani
21–22	Ghazan	73–74	Torus
23–24	Gurban	75–76	Tuli
25–26	Gyulk	77–78	Tumen
27–28	Hurdin	79–80	Tymuder
29–30	Hyalgin	81–82	Tylik
31–32	Inalchin	83–84	Tzarin
33–34	Isukin	85–86	Ulagan
35–36	Jaran	87–88	Unegen
37–38	Jalyv	89–90	Vachir
39–40	Juchin	91–92	Vechil
41–42	Khardu	93–94	Vechkin
43–44	Khavai	95–96	Yurin
45–46	Maikin	97–98	Yusin
47–48	Mochir	99–00	Yveg
49–50	Nasan		

— CAREERS —

Almost all the careers from the *WFRP* rulebook are suitable for Kislevite characters, though some require minor modifications.

The appropriate basic careers can be found in **Table 8–11:**

Starting Career. The only advanced careers you need to be careful of are: wizard careers (Kislevites have witches that are female only), the knight (Kislevites have winged lancers), the pistolier (Kislevites have horse archers), and careers not designed for Humans.

To modify a *WFRP* career for a Kislevite character, replace all instances of Common Knowledge (Reikspiel) with Common Knowledge (Kislev), and replace Speak Language (Reikspiel) with Speak Language (Kislevarin), and vice versa. Further, add “or Common Knowledge (the Empire)” to any other Common Knowledge options, and add “or Speak Language (Reikspiel)” to any other Speak Language options.

NEW CAREERS

Realm of the Ice Queen introduces sixteen new careers to *WFRP*. Basic careers open to non-Kislevites have rules for including them written into their description.

Basic Careers	Advanced Careers	Basic Careers	Advanced Careers
Apprentice Witch (G)	Ambassador	Steppes Nomad (U)	Hag Witch (U)
Bear Tamer	Ataman (K)	Streltsi (K)	Horse Archer (U)
Chekist (K)	Ice Maiden (G)	Wise Woman (U)	Horsemaster
Drover	Ice Witch (G)		Winged Lancer (G)
Horse Coper	Hag Mother (U)		

(G) These careers are for Gospodars only. (K) These careers are for Kislevites only (either tribe). (U) These careers are for Ungols only.

TABLE 8–II: STARTING CAREER

Career	Gospodar	Ungol						
Agitator	01–02	01–02	Hedge Wizard	34–35	33–34	Seaman	72	74
Apprentice Witch*	03–04	—	Horse Coper	36–37	35–36	Servant	73–74	75–76
Bailiff	05–06	03	Hunter	38–39	37–39	Smuggler	75–76	77–78
Barber-Surgeon	07–08	04	Initiate	40–41	40–41	Steppes Nomad	—	79–82
Bear Tamer	09–10	05–06	Jailer	42–43	42–43	Streltsi	77–78	83
Boatman	11–12	07–08	Kossar	44–46	44–45	Student	79–80	84
Bodyguard	13–14	09–10	Marine	47	46	Thief	81–82	85–86
Bone Picker	15	11–13	Mercenary	48–49	47–48	Thug	83–84	87–88
Bounty Hunter	16–17	14–15	Militiaman	50–51	49–50	Toll Keeper	85–86	89
Burgher	18–20	16	Miner	52–53	51–53	Tomb Robber	87–88	90
Camp Follower	21–22	17–19	Noble	54–55	54	Tradesman	89–90	91–92
Charcoal-Burner	23	20–21	Outlaw	56–57	55–57	Vagabond	91–92	93
Chekist	24–25	22	Outrider	58–59	58–60	Valet	93–94	94
Coachman	26	23	Peasant	60–61	61–64	Watchman	95–96	95
Drover	27–28	24–25	Pit Fighter	62–63	65–66	Wise Woman*	—	96–97
Entertainer	29–30	26–27	Protagonist	64–65	67–68	Woodsmen	97–98	98–99
Ferryman	31	28	Rat Catcher	66–67	69–70	Zealot	99–00	00
Fisherman	32	29–30	Rogue	68–69	71–72			
Grave Robber	33	31–32	Scribe	70–71	73			

* Male characters rolling this career are hedge wizards; or, if they are expatriates from the Empire, they may choose to be apprentice wizards.

TABLE 8–12: KISLEVITE EQUIPMENT

Name	Cost	Enc	Group	Damage	Range†	Reload	Qualities	Availability
Arrow (Armour Piercing)	5 <i>p</i>	2	—	—	—	—	Armour Piercing	Rare
Arrow (Incendiary)	4 <i>p</i>	3	—	–1	—	+Half	Special	Scarce
Arrow (Screamer)	6 <i>p</i>	3	—	–2	—	—	Special	Rare
Berdysh*	20 <i>gc</i>	100	Two-handed	SB	—	—	Fast, Impact, Tiring	Scarce
Bow (Kislevite Horse)*	20 <i>gc</i>	75	Ordinary	3	34/68	Half	—	Scarce
Bow (Kislevite Short)*	10 <i>gc</i>	65	Ordinary	3	16/32	Half	Precise	Rare
Herd Dog	3 <i>gc</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	Plentiful
Horse (Kislevite)	70 <i>gc</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	Common
Kibitka	2 <i>gc</i>	150	—	—	—	—	—	Common
Koumiss, Skin	6 <i>p</i>	5	—	—	—	—	—	Average
Kvas, Bottle	10 <i>p</i>	5	—	—	—	—	—	Common
Trained Bear	400 <i>gc</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	Scarce
Warhorse (Kislevite)	280 <i>gc</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	Scarce
Winged Banner	12 <i>gc</i>	50	—	—	—	—	Special	Scarce
Winged Banner (Screamer)	14 <i>gc</i>	55	—	—	—	—	Special	Rare
Winter Clothing	10 <i>gc</i>	45	—	—	—	—	Special	Plentiful
Yurta	—	10 <i>s</i>	30	—	—	—	—	—

* Requires two hands to wield. † Range is expressed in yards; if you are using squares, halve the listed numbers.

EQUIPMENT

This section details new trappings for Kislevite characters and provides Availability ratings for sourcing them. Increase the Availability difficulty by two steps (*e.g.* from Common to Scarce), and double the listed price if seeking these trappings in other Old World nations.

ITEM DESCRIPTION

The following items correspond to those listed on Table 8–12: Kislevite Equipment.

Arrow (Armour Piercing)

A yard-long arrow with a sharp, heavy head of tempered steel designed to punch through armoured Chaos marauders.

Arrow (Incendiary)

A four-foot-long arrow with a flammable head used to set enemy buildings (and enemies) alight and sow panic amongst ranks of troops.

Arrow (Screamer)

A yard-long arrow with a hollowed, bone head. When fired, air passes through the head, creating a screeching noise that can be used to signal allies or distract enemies or game.

Berdysh

An adaptation of the halberd designed by the Erengard Streltsi. Known as the Bardiche in the Empire, the Berdyshe's five-foot haft has a large, two-foot axe-blade incorporating a rest for steadying a handgun. A Berdyshe can be planted in soft ground for a half action, providing a +5 bonus to Ballistic Skill Tests when making aimed shots from firearms steadied upon it.

IT'S ALL KISLEVITE TO ME!

Most of the careers in Kislev would have different names to those in the *WFRP* rulebook. For example, a noble in Kislev is called a druzhina, and a noble lord is called a boyar. However, to reduce confusion, this chapter uses the terms provided in *WFRP* when directly referring to a career. So, where an outlaw from the north may be referred to as a kyazak, an ataman's steward may be called an esaul, and a champion may be titled droyaska (blademaster), as far as the rules are concerned, they are simply outlaws, stewards, and champions.

Bow (Kislevite Horse)

A recurve bow constructed from wood and bone or horn. The Kislevite Horse Bow is designed for range and power, and most Ungols of the steppe are trained to use it from childhood.

Bow (Kislevite Short)

A slightly smaller Kislevite Horse Bow with a subtly different shape. Kislevite Short Bows are designed to be accurate over short range.

Herd Dog

A scruffy, intelligent dog used by drovers to herd their animals. Use the Dog statistics found in *WFRP*, except increase its Intelligence by +3.

Horse (Kislevite)

Kislevite Riding Horses are smaller and hardier than other Old World breeds and have thicker manes and broader chests.

— Kislevite Riding Horse Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
25	0	37 (3)	42 (4)	29	10	15	0

Skills: Perception (Int +10), Swim (S)

Talents: Acute Hearing

Traits: Keen Senses

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 8; **Wounds:** 14

Weapons: Hooves (1d10–1)

Kibitka

A heavily decorated, portable tent constructed from wooden poles—or large bones—and multiple layers of felt. Kibitka are normally rectangular and have door frames festooned with charms and brightly coloured tassels. The listed example sleeps four people. To determine details of a larger example, add 10 *s* and 20 *Enc* per extra person it can house.

Koumiss, Skin

A strong alcoholic beverage made from fermented mare's milk. Koumiss was originally an Ungol creation, but it is now popular amongst all oblast folk.

Kvas, Bottle

A clear, distilled spirit popular throughout Kislev. Kvas is famous for its potency and medicinal properties.

Trained Bear

A trained Common Bear (statistics can be found on page 134). As the Bear is sacred in Kislev, having one can add +10 to any appropriate Perform Test. The GM should feel free to dictate local prices and Availability as suits his game, as most markets do not trade in Bears, and few Kislevites would buy one.

KISLEVITE COINS

Kislevites have three main coins: the gold ducat, the silver denga, and the copper pulo.

The design of the ducat and denga change with each Tzar or Tzarina and bear the profile of the appropriate monarch on one side and Bokha Palace on the other. The pulo has a bear's head on one face and an eagle on the back.

Warhorse (Kislevite)

A vicious warhorse with a bad temper. Although smaller than the great Destriers of the south, Kislevite Warhorses are tougher and can subsist on very little sustenance.

— Kislevite Warhorse Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
32	0	37 (3)	48 (4)	35	10	15	0

Skills: Perception (Int +10), Swim (S)

Talents: Acute Hearing, Strike Mighty Blow

Traits: Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Hoofs)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 8; **Wounds:** 16

Weapons: Hoof (1d10+4)

Winged Banner

A tall banner pole adorned with long eagle feathers. The quality of these banners varies from simple, carved poles to jewel-encrusted, gold-filigreed works of art.

Winged Banner (Screamer)

A Winged Banner with hollowed-bone decorations that emit shrill, eerie shrieks when wind passes through them. Characters charged by a mounted winged lancer with a Screamer Banner must pass a Willpower Test or only be able to take a half action on their next turn. A character can only be affected by this banner once per encounter.

Winter Clothing

An outfit of heavy furs, woollens, and thick leathers designed to keep out the cold. When worn, it grants a +10 bonus to any Toughness Tests made to resist the effects of exposure from cold but confers a –5 penalty to all Agility Tests.

Yurta

An easily transportable tent constructed from wooden poles and animal skins. Smaller examples are often simple and barely waterproof. Larger yurta—some capable of housing entire nomadic families—have straight sides and a conical roof. To determine the details of a larger yurta, multiply the listed price and *Enc* by the amount of people it can house.

NEW CAREERS

The following careers are appropriate for characters originating in Kislev.

AMBASSADOR (ADVANCED, SPECIAL)

Granted the right to speak on behalf of their sovereign, ambassadors can wield much power in the various national and provincial capitals of the Old World. In Kislev, ambassadors work tirelessly from their well-guarded embassies, keen to do whatever is necessary to catch the Ice Queen's eye. While some ambassadors are chosen for their exquisite tastes and ability to spoil rivals and allies alike with carefully chosen words and gifts, others may be selected for their sharp minds, understanding of intelligence networks, or undeniable charisma. Whatever their individual strengths, all ambassadors are of noble birth, for the Tzarina would never deign to meet a foreign peasant.

Special Requirements: You must be of noble birth (*i.e.* complete the Noble Career) and be appointed by a government.

Career Entries: Captain, High Priest, Ice Witch, Noble Lord, Wizard Lord

— Ambassador Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10	+10	+5	+10	+10	+30	+30	+40

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+6	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry or History) (Int), Blather (Fel) or Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (any two) (Int), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Fel), Perception (Int), Performer (Actor) (Fel),

Read/Write (Int), Ride (Ag), Speak Language (any three) (Int)

Talents: Dealmaker or Schemer, Etiquette, Linguistics or Suave, Master Orator or Savvy, Public Speaking

Trappings: Ambassadors are representatives of their governments, empowered to deal on behalf of their lands. As such, they must look the part. Ambassadors must have several sets of superior noble's garb, and many also have valuable jewellery to enhance their ensemble. An ambassador should keep a contingent of guards (no fewer than six). Finally, ambassadors are often quite wealthy and must have coin, jewellery, art objects, property, and so on worth no less than 1,000 gc.

Career Exits: Captain, Merchant, Noble Lord, Politician

APPRENTICE WITCH (BASIC, SPECIAL)

Every year, ice witches emerge from the frozen oblast to assess shivering Gospodar girls. The rare girl demonstrating magical talent is taken away and is unlikely to see her family again. Barely old enough to be called women, these apprentices-to-be are led into the depths of Kislev's cruel winter, and there, they are taught the ways of the Khan-Queens of old. Those who survive (and many do not) are forever changed: they are cold, aloof, mature well beyond their years, and very aware of their insignificance beside the might of the Ancient Widow's glacial heart. Eventually, these successful apprentices will be released from their mistresses and allowed to venture forth as "maidens of the ice."

Special Requirements: You must be female to enter this career.

Career Entries: Any

— Apprentice Witch Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
—	—	—	+10	+5	+10	+10	—



AMBASSADOR



APPRENTICE WITCH



ATAMAN



BEAR TAMER

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	+1	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Magic) (Int) or Intimidate (S), Channelling (WP), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int), Magical Sense (WP), Navigation (Int) or Perception (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Kislevarin) (Int)

Talents: Aethyric Attunement or Lesser Magic (any one), Hardy or Very Resilient, Petty Magic (Ice)

Trappings: Given the harsh conditions of their training, apprentice witches need survival gear, generally consisting of a sturdy suit of winter clothing, a pack or sling bag, a flask of kvas to warm their bones, and a few days of rations.

Career Exits: Ice Maiden, Initiate of Ulric, Witch (RoS, page 131)

ATAMAN (ADVANCED)

Most oblast communities are led by atamans (female: atamankas). Gospodar atamans are normally druzhina whose families have ruled locally for generations. By comparison, most Ungols elect their atamans or select them according to obscure (often martial) traditions, for most of their noble bloodlines were wiped out by the Gospodars long ago. Atamans bear great responsibilities, for all important local matters are decided by them, especially those concerning security and law. Further, if there are no local priests, atamans also take on the responsibility for the spiritual wellbeing of their people, leading religious rites and ceremonies.

Career Entries: Captain, Horse Master, Noble, Veteran

— Ataman Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10	+10	+5	+15	+5	+30	+20	+25

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History or Law, Strategy Tactics or Theology) (Int), Charm (Fel) or Intimidate (S), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Kislev or Troll Country) (Int), Gossip (Fel) or Outdoor Survival (Int), Haggle (Fel), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Speak Language (Kislevarin) (Int)

Talents: Coolheaded or Suave, Public Speaking

Trappings: An ataman must be a distinguished member of a Kislevite community. To stand out from the rest of their people, atamans wield a *bulava*, a ceremonial mace (Superior Hand Weapon) recognised as a symbol of authority throughout Kislev.

Career Exits: Politician, Priest, Noble Lord

BEAR TAMER (BASIC)

The bear is sacred in Kislev. It features in the myths and legends of both tribes and is venerated by the powerful Cult of Ursun. Bears are perceived as living embodiments of the land's enduring might and strength, and the struggles all Kislevites must endure. Therefore, boyars often recruit bear tamers to support their armed forces, keeping bears as inspiring mascots and sometimes for use in war. As Kislevites gather in great numbers to see bears, bear trainers are also common in Kislev's famous circuses and on the streets during festival time, where they dance or show-wrestle for coin.

If you are rolling randomly for your starting career and are not rolling a Kislevite, you can substitute bear tamer for entertainer with your GM's permission.

Career Entries: Entertainer, Initiate of Ursun, Priest of Ursun

— Bear Tamer Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+5	—	+10	+5	+5	—	+10	+5

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Animal Training (Fel), Charm Animal (Fel), Consume Alcohol (T) or Gossip (Fel), Perception (Int) or Performer (any one) (Fel), Speak Language (Kislevarin) (Int)

Talents: Coolheaded or Very Strong, Lightning Reflexes or Public Speaking, Very Resilient or Wrestling

Trappings: Bear tamers find that a bit of armour goes a long way towards deflecting the claws of an unruly or grouchy bear and so most wear at least leather jacks. As well, every bear tamer needs a collar and chain for his beast, and a whip or goad can't hurt. A starting bear tamer must also have a bear, which he can train over the course of his career.

Career Exits: Entertainer, Initiate of Ursun, Pit Fighter, Soldier

CHEKIST (BASIC)

The principal goal of the chekist—the Ice Queen's secret police—is to ensure the personal and political security of the Tzarina and her family. This task is performed by any means possible, regardless of local laws; after all, in Kislev, what the chekist deems as law, *is* law. Their techniques employed to investigate the various Chaos cults, revolutionaries, criminals, hostile organisations, spies, and manifold other “threats” are often brutal, leaving the chekist with an ugly reputation. Their headquarters squat in Kislev city, but rumours suggest they have offices throughout the Ancient Widow's land, all siphoning information back to the capital. Some suggest the chekist even have agents in the Empire and beyond, each monitoring the activities of foreign threats to the Ice Queen and her rule; but this, of course, is denied.

Career Entries: Kossar, Protagonist, Streletsi, Thug, Watchman

TRAINED BEARS (SPECIAL)

Trained bears are dangerous but do not attack others unless provoked. However, just to be sure, they are rarely taken anywhere without heavy chains—especially as they often act erratically when their owners are absent.

Bear trainers can compel their bears to take move actions by growling orders or using hand gestures. This action does not require a skill test. To have a bear perform any other action requires the trainer to take a Use a Skill half-action and pass a Charm Animal Test. Each degree of success forces the bear to repeat the ordered action for one round (as necessary). Failure means the bear does nothing. With 3 degrees of failure or more, the bear gets confused and lashes out at the closest target. These Charm Animal Tests should be modified according to how the creature is treated, trained, and fed. Examples of how the GM can do this can be found in the *Old World Armoury* or *OWA* (pages 101–103), which includes rules for henchmen that can be adapted to fit trained bears.

Trained bears eat a mixture of berries, plants, roots, fungus, insects, and fish. These supplies cost about 2 *s* a day, and as little as 6 *p* a day in the wilderness, since the bear can supplement his diet with foraging. Although bears normally hibernate in winter, if food is readily available, they may forgo this.

Trained bears earn half the experience points of their trainer.

Special Requirement: To enter this career, you must be a bear. Surprise! See page 130 for common Bear statistics.

— Trained Bear Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Dodge Blow (Ag), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Search (Int), Swim (S)

Talents: Ambidextrous, Disarm, Frenzy, Menacing, Stout-hearted, Strike to Stun, Wrestling

Career Exits: —

Bears add the Slow Learner Trait to their statistics in *WFRP*.

Slow Learner

A bear is not easily trained. Whenever a bear would gain a characteristic advance, skill, or talent, its trainer must pass an Animal Training Test. Should the trainer fail the test, the experience points are lost, and the bear does not gain the desired characteristic, skill, or talent.

— Checklist Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	+5	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Law or Intimidate) (Int), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag) or Shadowing (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Search (Int)

Talents: Disarm or Specialist Weapon Group (Gunpowder), Menacing, Strike Mighty Blow or Strike to Stun

Trappings: Chekist are all identifiable by their black uniforms. Most wear leather jacks and leggings, and they all have distinctive helmets. Chekist are armed with bronze-tipped cudgels (Hand Weapon) and ride black Kislevite horses equipped with saddle, harness, and saddlebags.

Career Exits: Jailor, Interrogator, Mercenary, Racketeer, Sergeant, Soldier, Spy, Veteran, Watchman

DROVER (BASIC)

Great herds of domesticated animals endlessly cross the wind-swept oblast, escorted from pasture to market, from market to customer. The tireless drovers overseeing these transfers can travel many hundred of miles with their herds, and some even visit distant markets in Ostermark or Ostland. Most drovers employ vicious dogs to help direct and guard the herds, and the distinctive barks and whistles used to control these hounds are a familiar sound on the oblast. In the civilised south there are regular competitions between drovers to see who can best herd animals with their dogs, and the winner is guaranteed the most lucrative contracts.

Career Entries: Coachman, Messenger, Outrider, Steppes Nomad

— Drover Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+5	+10	+10	+5	+10	—	+5	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Animal Training (Fel) or Charm Animal (Fel), Common Knowledge (Kislev or Troll Country) (Int), Follow Trail (Int), Navigation (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Speak Language (Kislevite or Ungol) (Int)

Talents: Orientation, Rover or Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Entangling)



CHECKIST

Trappings: Drovers all have at least one herd dog and a Kislevite horse equipped with a saddle and harness. They use a lasso to round up errant herd animals. For personal equipment, drovers always have several days of rations and a couple of skins for water or kvas, as well as a yurta for shelter. The often dangerous environment necessitates some armour, usually a leather jack and leggings.

Career Exits: Highwayman, Horse Coper, Horse Master, Messenger, Outlaw, Outrider, Roadwarden, Scout

HAG MOTHER (ADVANCED, SPECIAL)

The legendary hag mothers are very powerful hag witches, known for their powers of divination, healing, and their influence over the Ancient Widow's spirits. Most eke out simple lives in rustic huts far from the communities they watch over. These hag mothers rarely leave their haunted homes, forcing those seeking their aid to undertake arduous journeys to reach them. However, a few hag mothers do wander Kislev, following wherever the spirits lead them and sharing their knowledge. Although most appear impossibly old and bent—their twisted spines creaking alarmingly at the smallest movement—many retain their youthful vigour and can be unexpectedly spry.

Special Requirements: You must be an Ungol female to enter this career.

Career Entries: Hag Witch

— Hag Mother Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
—	—	+5	+20	+10	+40	+30	+15

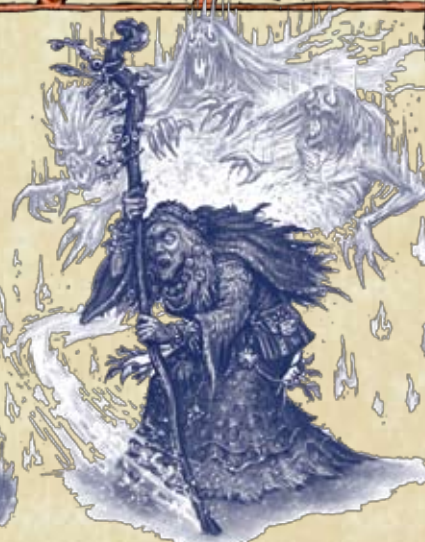
Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+6	—	—	—	+3	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Daemonology or Spirits, History or Necromancy, plus any one) (Int), Animal



DROVER



HAG MOTHER

Care (Int), Charm Animal (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Kislev or Troll Country, plus any one) (Int), Heal (Int) or Prepare Poison (Int), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Magick, plus any one) (Int), Speak Language (Ungol) (Int), Trade (Apothecary or Herbalist) (Int)

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Excellent Vision or Luck, Lesser Magic (any three), Rover or Sixth Sense, Witch Lore (Hag)

Trappings: Like other hags, hag mothers are talented healers, and they are never without the accoutrements of the trade. A hag mother usually carries an antitoxin kit, an apothecary kit, and at least three healing draughts and healing poultices. Most also have three or more potions (RoS, page 192). To ward away the chill that infiltrates everything, they also are never far from a skin of koumiss. Hag mothers wear the distinctive shawl and often carry walking sticks.

Career Exits: None

HAG WITCH (ADVANCED, SPECIAL)

Few Ungol women develop magical powers without first demonstrating “the sight.” Thus, most hag witches—women who can invoke the spirits of Kislev—were wise women first. Their powers are said to be a blessing and a curse, for although the hags can undoubtedly aid their local communities, the spirits demand a high price for their compliance: premature aging. Because of this consequence, most wise women dread the possibility of the spirits answering their call. As well as the wise women, those who suffer a great loss—such as the death of a husband or child—may also be chosen by the Ancient Widow and gain an intimate understanding of Kislev’s tormented spirits. Hag witches who come to power in this way often live alone, grieving for their lost loved ones and fading youth.

Special Requirements: You must be an Ungol female to enter this career.

Career Entries: Wise Woman


HAG WITCH

HORSE ARCHER

HORSE COPER

— Hag Witch Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
—	—	+5	+10	+5	+25	+20	+10

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+4	—	—	—	+1	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History or Spirits) (Int), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Kislev or Troll Country) (Int), Consume Alcohol (T) or Perception (Int), Heal (Int), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Prepare Poison (Int) or Trade (Apothecary or Herbalist) (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Ungol) (Int)

Talents: Fast Hands, Hardy or Strong-minded, Lesser Magic (any three), Meditation, Petty Magic (Hag)

Trappings: Hag witches are gifted healers, so they always have at least one antitoxin kit, a healing draught, a healing poultice, and a skin of koumiss to fight the cold. They are also quite superstitious and, thus, carry a number of small charms that include bits of bone, locks of hair, unusual stones, and so on. They mark their station with the tell-tale shawl.

Career Exits: Demagogue, Hag Mother, Politician, Witch (RoS, page 131)

HORSE ARCHER (ADVANCED)

Ungol horse archers are expert marksmen and are celebrated as some of the finest light cavalry in the Old World. Their skills with scimitar, spear, and horse bow are expertly honed hunting kyazak on the Endless Steppe, a land they constantly patrol at the order of the Tzarina. Their most common tactic is to circle their enemy and pour arrow after arrow into them. Amongst the embattled Ungols of the Troll Country, all able-bodied individuals are required to fight, especially when Chaos marauders attack. Thus, it is common to find women amongst rotas of northern horse archers, a tradition southern Kislevites sometimes find difficult to accept.

Career Entries: Horse Master, Noble, Peasant, Steppes Nomad

— Horse Archer Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+15	+25	+15	+15	+15	—	+15	+5

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Command (Fel) or Navigation (Int), Common Knowledge (Kislev or Troll Country) (Int), Consume

OLDER WISE WOMEN

If you wish to create an experienced wise woman but not one that is a witch, you can still use the hag careers. In this single instance, those careers may be completed without increasing the Magic Characteristic or selecting any of the magical skills or talents; however, if you wish, you may still purchase Arcane Language (Magick) and Magical Sense.

In a society that respects the experience and practical learning of the wise women, these formidable matriarchs are given a great deal of deference. They habitually dominate younger wise women and hag witches and can prove to be an ataman's worst nightmare.

Alcohol (T), Dodge Blow (Ag), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Speak Language (Kislevite or Ungol) (Int)

Talents: Coolheaded or Hardy, Mighty Shot or Sure Shot, Rapid Reload or Quick Draw, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry)

Trappings: Horse archers are warriors all. They wear leather jacks and leggings that often feature good luck charms made from locks of hair or pieces of lightning-struck metal. Horse archers are also well-armed, as they are equipped with cavalry spears (as demilance), Kislevite horse bows with quivers containing 20 arrows, 20 armour-piercing arrows, and at least 5 screamer and 5 incendiary arrows. They ride Kislevite warhorses equipped with saddles and harnesses and common gear to survive in the oblast, such as saddle bags filled with rations, water skins, and a yurta.

Career Exits: Captain, Horse Master, Mercenary, Scout, Steppes Nomad, Targeteer, Veteran

HORSE COPER (BASIC)

Horse copers (horse salesman) are notorious for being smarmy and dishonest. It seems every stable has a grinning coper offering "the very best horse flesh on the market, sire," descended from "the strongest bloodlines of the Ostermarker Veldt, sire." As horses are central to Kislevite life, the market is incredibly competitive, and buyers have a hard time finding a reliable dealer, especially as most will try any underhanded trick to ensure a sale. Some disreputable copers happily paint rotten teeth white, pass off diseased nags as "shy," and proudly boast infertile stallions will "sire a line o' beauties, sire." Indeed, the only place horse copers never sell to is the knacker's yards, though it is a good source for stock.

If you are rolling randomly for your starting career and are not rolling a Kislevite, you can substitute horse coper for burgher with your GM's permission.

Career Entries: Burgher, Drover, Horse Master, Messenger, Steppes Nomad

— Horse Coper Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
—	+5	+5	—	+5	+5	+5	+15

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Charm (Fel) or Consume Alcohol (T), Charm Animal (Fel), Evaluate (Int), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Fel), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Speak Language (Kislevite or Ungol) (Int)

Talents: Dealmaker or Flee!, Specialist Weapon Group (Entangling), Suave

Trappings: It wouldn't do to look shabby when trying to

sell goods, so horse copers always have a set of superior clothing. To control their beasts, copers also carry a lasso or whip. In addition, they have a number of horses ready for sale (ids of varying quality) and have a bit of coin for bribes, feed, and stabling (idro gc).

Career Exits: Burgher, Charlatan, Horse Master, Merchant, Rogue

HORSEMASTER (ADVANCED)

Horsemasters are responsible for the well-being, training, and breeding of horses, and they hold positions of importance in all levels of Kislevite society. Amongst the steppes nomads, the horsemaster is often second only to the ataman, as his skills guarantee the continued survival of his community. No horsemaster holds more power in Kislev than the *koniushy*, the Ice Queen's own Master of the Horse. This influential boyar maintains not only the Tzarina's stables but her kennels as well. Thus, his office has access to a sizeable portion of the Ice Queen's treasury, all to train and equip her animals to the best possible standard.

Career Entries: Drover, Horse Archer, Horse Coper, Mercenary, Noble, Outlaw, Outrider, Pistolier, Roadwarden, Scout, Soldier, Squire, Steppes Nomad, Winged Lancer

— Horsemaster Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+5	+15	+15	+10	+15	+20	+15	+25

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+5	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Animal Training (Fel), Charm (Fel), Charm Animal (Fel), Consume Alcohol (T) or Dodge Blow (Ag), Drive (S), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag)

Talents: Coolheaded or Hardy, Specialist Weapon Group (Entangling), Very Strong



HORSE MASTER

**ICE MAIDEN**

Trappings: The horsemaster naturally rides a Kislevite horse or warhorse equipped with saddle, harness, and at least one saddlebag to carry a grooming kit and extra feed. Horsemasters also find lassos or whips useful, and like most Kislevites, they wear leather jacks and leggings.

Career Exits: Ataman, Drover, Horse Archer, Horse Coper, Merchant, Sergeant, Winged Lancer

ICE MAIDEN (ADVANCED, SPECIAL)

When apprentice witches finish their training, they are released from their mistresses to seek a deeper understanding of Ice Magic. To do this, they must mirror the Ancient Widow as closely as possible, so they swear vows of chastity (to represent being widowed) before forging forth with cold determination in their hearts. Maidens of the ice can be found in the most unlikely places as they quest for understanding, but most commonly, they wander the frozen oblast, facing kyazak, the land's spirits, and ferocious Greenskins with equal resolve. An ice maiden's vow of chastity ends when she gains insight into her wintry magic and becomes a full ice witch; however, for

**ICE WITCH**

some, this understanding never comes, and they remain forever alone.

Special Requirements: You must be female to enter this career.

Career Entries: Apprentice Witch

— Ice Maiden Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+5	—	—	+10	+5	+20	+25	+10

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+4	—	—	—	+2	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Magic) (Int), Channelling (WP), Command (Fel) or Intimidate (S), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int), Magical Sense (WP), Navigation (Int) or Read/Write (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int) or Ride (Ag), Perception (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Kislevian) (Int)

Talents: Coolheaded, Lesser Magic (any three), Meditation or Mighty Missile, Stout-hearted or Strong-minded, Witch Lore (Ice)

Trappings: Ice Maidens have few belongings and are equipped with sturdy winter clothing and a flask of kvas to keep the warm.

Career Exits: Courtier, Ice Witch, Scout, Sergeant, Veteran, Witch (RoS, page 131)

ICE WITCH (ADVANCED, SPECIAL)

The ice witches of Kislev are feared and respected throughout the Old World. They are the darkest winter, the coldest ice, and the cruellest blizzard, and few can bear their presence for long. But being an ice witch is more than simply practicing Ice Magic and defending Kislev from its foes. Ice witches are part

NEW TALENT: WITCH LORE

You have studied one of the established witching traditions of the Old World. Like Arcane Lore or Divine Lore, Witchery is not one talent but many. Such is the study and focus required, you can only ever know one Witch Lore Talent and can never also know an Arcane Lore, Dark Lore, or Divine Lore. Each Witch Lore is a separate magical proficiency, the speciality noted in parenthesis. For example: Witch Lore (Hag) is a different talent than Witch Lore (Ice). If you know a Witch Lore, you may cast spells from that lore according to the rules presented in **Chapter IX: Magic and Miracles**.

of an ancient sisterhood that has long influenced and often ruled the Gospodar tribe—and still does to this day. They are in touch with the wintry spirits of the land and the frozen flows of magic surging through it; thus, they work hard to preserve the old ways and ancient places, keen to ensure their pristine magic remains unsullied and pure.

Special Requirements: You must be female to enter this career.

Career Entries: Ice Maiden

— Ice Witch Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+15	—	+5	+20	+15	+30	+40	+15

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+6	—	—	—	+4	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Magic, plus any one) (Int), Channelling (WP), Command (Fel) or Intimidate (S), Common Knowledge (Kislev, plus any one) (Int), Magical Sense (WP), Outdoor Survival (Int) or Ride (Ag), Perception (Int), Read/Write (Int), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Kislevarin, plus any two) (Int)

Talents: Fast Hands, Lesser Magic (any three), Menacing or Unsettling

Trappings: Ice witches all wear superior winter clothing and often accent their attire with a few bits of jewellery studded with diamonds or sapphires. As well, ice witches carry at least one magic item found during their wanderings as ice maidens.

Career Exits: Ambassador, Captain

STEPPE NOMAD (BASIC, SPECIAL)

Uncounted krugs of Ungol nomads wander the frozen steppes of the Troll Country. These tribesmen were pushed north when the Gospodars invaded and have roamed the dangerous province ever since. There, they follow their domesticated herds from pasture to pasture, chasing the warmth of Dazh, their patron, and settling briefly in portable huts called *kibitkas*. They are a passionate and fierce folk, tempered by harsh surroundings and endless conflicts with marauding kyazaks. By Kislevite law, every nomadic krug is expected to annually form a rota of Kislev's famed horse archers, which then patrols the northern oblast every Spring Driving, ruthlessly slaughtering any invaders they encounter.

Special Requirements: You must be Ungol and you must be a member of a nomadic krug.

Career Entries: Any

— Steppes Nomad Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10	+10	—	+5	+5	—	+10	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Animal Care (Int), Animal Training (Fel) or Trade (Cook) (Int), Charm Animal (Fel) or Consume Alcohol (T), Common Knowledge (Troll Country) (Int), Concealment (Ag) or Heal (Int), Follow Trail (Int) or Trade (Bowyer) (Ag), Navigation (Int) or Secret Signs (Scout) (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int) or Performer (Dancer) (Fel), Ride (Ag)

Talents: Hardy or Rover

Trappings: Steppe nomads are accustomed to the harshness of their environment, so they are equipped accordingly. A sturdy Kislevite horse with saddle and harness laden with at least a week of ration, a few skins of water and koumiss, and a yurta ensure the steppe nomad survives the biting winds and the frigid temperatures. The steppe is also home to ravenous beasts and terrifying monsters, so steppe nomads wear leather jacks and leggings for protection, and all carry at least a Kislevite horse bow with a quiver of 10 arrows.

Career Exits: Ataman, Horse Archer, Horse Master, Kossar, Outlaw, Scout, Vagabond

STRELTSI (BASIC)

The streltsi were originally a rota of kossars from Erengrad. Led by Boyar Boydinov—an eccentric noble obsessed with the Empire—they wielded pole-axes rather than axes, mirroring the halberds favoured by the State Regiments of Ostland. In 2345 IC, whilst driving back a Chaos horde alongside Empire allies, the wide-eyed boyar witnessed Imperial black powder for the first time. His kossars were changed forever. Now, many years after the death of Boydinov, the streltsi are the foremost masters of firearms in Kislev, weapons once viewed with fear and superstition. Soldiers from across Kislev travel to Erengrad to earn the crossed “berdysh and handgun” badge, which is awarded to any who train with the streltsi for more than two seasons.

Career Entries: Kossar, Watchman

— Streltsi Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10	+10	+5	+5	+5	—	+5	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int) or Perception (Int), Consume Alcohol (T), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gamble (Int) or Gossip (Fel), Speak Language (Kislevarin) (Int)

Talents: Marksman or Sharpshooter, Master Gunner or Quick Draw, Mighty Shot or Rapid Reload, Specialist Weapon Group (Gunpowder, Two-handed)

THE FIRST WINGED LANCERS?

The white, limestone caves of Zamak Spayenya hide many primitive paintings from a forgotten era. Most depict hunting scenes that feature stylised animals, including bear, elk, deer, and horses; but these animals are not hunted by men: they are hunted by great, winged centaurs.

Some Kislevite scholars believe these to be the Scythian people that once inhabited the oblast, but others bitterly argue against this. Instead, they claim the Scythians were Humans who used centaurs as a metaphor to show man and horse were inseparable, and wings to signify galloping at great speed.

Trappings: The streltsi are all distinguishable by the smart uniforms they wear beneath a leather jerkin, leggings, and helmet. They carry berdysh—special pole-arms designed to improve accuracy with the firearms they also carry. Streltsi keep enough powder and shot to shoot their firearm up to 10 times.

Career Exits: Bounty Hunter, Chekist, Mercenary, Sergeant, Veteran, Watchman, Winged Lancer

WINGED LANCER (ADVANCED)

Every Gospodar settlement annually raises a rota of winged lancers. Each spring, eager young men muster alongside veterans and don armour at their rotamaster's command. To the sound of weeping womenfolk, they ride, their winged banners fluttering behind them. Until their return, they are known as the "Riders of the Dead," for they are mourned as if already deceased. Every rota of lancers has a different character. Where some southern examples are like Imperial knights, sporting colourful pennants, intricately decorated armour, and great animal pelts, lancers from beyond the Lynsk are more akin to Ungol nomads, having heavy moustaches, top-knots, and fur-lined charms to ward against evil.

Career Entries: Horse Master, Kossar, Noble, Outrider, Peasant, Streltsi

— Winged Lancer Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+25	+15	+15	+15	+15	—	+15	+15

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Animal Care (Int) or Dodge Blow (Ag), Command (Fel) or Navigation (Int), Common Knowledge (Kislev or Troll Country) (Int), Consume Alcohol (T), Outdoor Survival (Int), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Kislevarin) (Int)

Talents: Hardy or Very Resilient, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry), Strike Mighty Blow or Strike to Injure

Trappings: Winged lancers are fearsome warriors, and they dress the part. All winged lancers have at least full suits of mail, though some accent their armour with bits of plate. From their backs fly winged banners. In battle, they thunder across the field, riding Kislevite warhorses equipped with saddles and harnesses. For arms, they



STRELTSI

WINGED LANCER



WISE WOMAN

THE WISE WOMEN HONORIFIC

All wise women are titled “baba.” If a girl named Noga is accepted by a wise woman krug, she would be called Baba Noga thereafter. Even though baba roughly translates to “grandmother,” all wise women, regardless of age, use it. Hag witches—who are simply wise women with the ability to cast magic—use the same title. Grandier titles are pointless to the hags, who view such trappings of power as pretentious, arrogant, and foolish. After all, an untried 20-year-old hag obviously would not have more influence than an experienced 60-year-old wise woman.

carry lances, scimitars (Hand Weapons), shields, and at least two javelins. Finally, such heroes keep a bottle of kvas to help them through the icy nights.

Career Exits: Captain, Horse Master, Scout, Veteran

WISE WOMAN (BASIC, SPECIAL)

Most Ungol communities are tended by a krug of dark-shawled wise women. These no-nonsense matriarchs guard uncounted generations of oral traditions and tribal secrets. This knowledge is put to good use tending the sick, aiding childbirth, advising local leaders, placating the spirits of the land, and warding their folk against the taint of Chaos. Wise women krugs gather in specially decorated kikitkas that men are forbidden to enter; there, they share lore and discuss matters of importance. Girls who demonstrate “the sight” are interviewed in these tents to determine their suitability to join the wise women, an experience that can terrify even the strong of mind.

Special Requirements: You must be an Ungol female to enter this career.

Career Entries: Any

— Wise Woman Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
—	—	—	+5	—	+15	+10	+5

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE (SPIRITS)

This new category of the Academic Knowledge Skill grants knowledge of the many spirits inhabiting the *Warhammer* world, including nature spirits, spirits of the dead, Aethyric spirits, and similar. Not only can you name them (according to your local traditions), but you may know methods of appeasing, annoying, or perhaps even dismissing them, as determined by successful use of the skill and the GM.

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History or Spirits) (Int), Charm (Fel) or Intimidate (S), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Kislev or Troll Country) (Int), Consume Alcohol (T) or Gossip (Fel), Heal (Int), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Performer (Storyteller) (Fel), Prepare Poison (Int) or Trade (Apothecary or Herbalist) (Int), Speak Language (Ungol) (Int)

Talents: Coolheaded or Savvy

Trappings: Wise women are gifted healers, so they always have at least one antitoxin kit, healing draught, a healing poultice, and a skin of koumiss to ease other sorts of hurts. They are also quite superstitious and, thus, carry a number of small charms that include bits of bone, locks of hair, unusual stones, and so on. They mark their station with the tell-tale shawl, a beautifully woven length of cloth they wear draped from their heads or around their necks.

Career Exits: Demagogue, Hag Witch, Hedge Witch, Politician, Steppes Nomad



MAGIC AND MIRACLES

"I hear tale of Great College of Magic and how it save Kislev from Chaos. Nekulturny talk! Many century before College and precious Elf founder, Kislevarin witches guard land with old Human magic. Yha, Imperinyi and Elf wizards come to Kislev's Gate in Great War, but they are few to Kislev's many!"

—OLEGVA OLGASYN, RETIRED KOSSAR



Unlike the Empire, Kislev's magical traditions have long been accepted by its people. This tolerance is unthinkable to many Old Worlders, who rightly fear magic for the danger it is. But most Kislevites do not share this view and openly embrace their old ways; indeed, their current ruler, Tzarina Katarin Bokha, is a witch.

The Kislevite pragmatic nature is a strong influence on this acceptance. After all, Kislev's witches fend off the marauders of the north, so why revile them? However, as Kislev was also founded by a witch, supported by witches, and is currently ruled by a witch, it should be no surprise to see them so widely accepted.

Due to their proximity to the Shadowlands, Kislev's witches long ago learned to avoid the Chaos Winds, for they blow strongly in the north and almost always herald corruption and mutation.

Thus, they mastered alternative methods of casting spells. This difference has helped build their comparatively good reputation, for they are not so readily associated with the Ruinous Powers.

To further ensure they do not succumb to the temptations of Chaos, the witches have taken another extreme measure. They believe the Winds of Magic corrupt those who are ambitious, warlike, or greedy, and the witches claim these traits are primarily masculine. So in Kislev, magic is solely practised by women and is seen as a feminine art. Male spellcasters in Kislev are figures of hatred and ridicule, for no sane man would risk his soul by meddling with womanly matters.

By comparison, Kislev's divine magic is much the same as elsewhere, and priests able to empower their words with divine authority are celebrated by the people, regardless of their gender.

— HAG WITCHES —

Millennia ago, the Ungols learned to cast magic without using the mutating Chaos Winds. Their spellcasters mastered techniques to manipulate, cajole, bully, and bribe the many spirits of Kislev to do magic for them. However, these spirits are capricious and demand a terrible price in return: a witch's youth.

The following rules for hag witches replace their equivalents in *WFRP*. If a rule is not replaced, it is used as normal.

CASTING SPELLS

As a hag witch, your Magic Characteristic indicates the power of the spirits you can bend to your will. Spellcasting is handled normally, but your unique manipulation of magic makes almost everything else different.

COMMANDING

You do not use the Channelling Skill to boost your Casting Roll. Instead, for a half action, you can force the spirits to do this for you by passing a Command Test (use Will Power as the base characteristic, not Fellowship) to gain a bonus equal to your Magic Characteristic on your next spell, just as if you had Channelled. If this test fails by three degrees or more, you must roll on **Table 9-1: Fury of the Spirits**.

INGREDIENTS

To attract and control the spirits, you must always use ingredients. If you do not have a spell's ingredient, you cannot cast it. As always, ingredients provide a bonus of +1 to +3 to Casting Rolls.

AUTOMATIC FAILURE

Like other spellcasters, rolling all ones on your Casting Roll results in automatic spell failure. However, instead of gaining a potential Insanity Point, you must pass a Command Test to hold off the spirits (using Will Power as the base characteristic, not Fellowship) or gain a Witch Mark from **Table 9–3: Marks of the Hag Witch**. If this test fails by three degrees or more, you must also roll on **Table 9–1: Fury of the Spirits**.

FURY OF THE SPIRITS

As a hag, you rarely suffer from Tzeentch's Curse as you do not directly channel the Winds of Magic. However, the spirits you manipulate sometimes take offence and may retaliate.

If you roll doubles or triples on your Casting Roll, or if you fail a Command Test to control the spirits by three degrees or more, the spirits move beyond your control, and you must roll on **Table 9–1: Fury of the Spirits**. Unless the table says otherwise, spells are still cast if their Casting Numbers are achieved.

SPELLCASTING LIMITS

As well as the standard spellcasting limits, you always use an ingredient when casting. Thus, you cannot cast magic if you cannot access your ingredients. Further, if your spell is interrupted during casting, instead of a Channelling Test, you must make a Command Test (using Will Power as the base characteristic, not Fellowship) to keep the spirits in line. If you fail this test, the spell is aborted. If you fail this test by three degrees or more, you must roll on **Table 9–1: Fury of the Spirits**.

SPIRIT ACTIVITY

As you do not use the Channelling Skill, you do not modify your Casting Roll according to the strength of the local Winds of Magic. Instead, you modify your Casting Roll according to the number of the local spirits. Spirits of varying power are found throughout the Old World, and some ancient sites attract them in great numbers.

Much like the strength of the Winds of Magic, local spirit activity is left in the hands of the GM and uses the same modifiers as **Variable Winds** (*WFRP*, page 145).

THE SIGHT

Hag witches (and wise women) make extensive use of the Magical Sense Skill, which they call "the sight." Uncounted centuries of travelling the Troll Country and guarding their tribe from its taint have refined this skill, allowing them to detect the influence of the Dark Gods.

Whenever you encounter something tainted by the Ruinous Powers, you will feel uncomfortable with a successful Magical Sense Test (which the GM may wish to roll in secret). A Challenging (–10) Magical Sense Test determines the general direction the taint comes from. A Hard (–20) Magical Sense Test identifies if something touched is tainted.



TABLE 9–1: FURY OF THE SPIRITS

Roll	Result
01–15	Unruly: The spirits crowd you, giggling, tweaking, screaming, and jostling, leaving you stunned for 1 round.
16–30	Obstinate: The spirits grow mulish, making your magic harder to cast. Add a half action to your spell's casting time. You must take this time even if you failed to cast the spell.
31–45	Bored: The spirits abandon you. You cannot cast spells for 1d10 rounds.
46–60	Upset: The spirits refuse your demands. Your next 1d5 spells automatically fail.
61–80	Cursed: The spirits punish you. You are cursed for 1d10 days with a <i>greater curse</i> (page 117), as determined by the GM.
81–90	Enraged: The spirits have had enough, and 1d5 spirits attack you and your immediate allies for 1d10 turns. The GM determines the power of the spirits by the power of the witch. Examples for appropriate statistics include Dryads (<i>Old World Bestiary</i> or <i>OWB</i> , page 92), Glimmers (page 136), Spirits (<i>OWB</i> , page 109), Spites (<i>Warhammer Companion</i> or <i>WC</i> , page 125), and Naiads (<i>WC</i> , page 123).
91–99	Leakage: The spirits let the Aethyr touch you. Roll for a Minor Chaos Manifestation (see <i>WFRP</i> , page 143 or <i>RoS</i> , page 250).
00	Daemonic Aid: The spirits may be too angry to aid you, but the Dark Gods always listen. Roll for a Major Chaos Manifestation (see <i>WFRP</i> , page 143 or <i>RoS</i> , page 251).

— ICE WITCHES —

Before invading the Old World, the first ice witches practised their magic on the Endless Steppe. Unlike their Kurgan neighbours—who worshipped the Great Eye and channelled the dangerous magic it seeped—the Gospodars learned to tap the cold power coursing through the land. Although this magic did not carry the same risks of mutation, it was difficult to control and often killed unwary witches. Many centuries later, things are little different.

The following rules for ice witches replace their equivalents in *WFRP*. If a rule is not replaced, it is used as normal.

CASTING SPELLS

As an ice witch, your Magic Characteristic represents how much Ice Magic you can channel. Spellcasting is handled normally but is modified by some new rules.

CHANNELLING

You need access to Ice Magic to cast your spells. In Kislev, this is never a problem because even in summer, the leylines are flooded with chill power, and your spells can be cast normally. The same applies when you are surrounded by freezing conditions (harsh winters, tundra, ice houses, etc.). However, in other situations, all spells first need a Channelling Test (which requires a Use a Skill half action) to draw the Ice Magic to you. This Channelling Test does not provide a bonus to your Casting Roll (nor will any other); instead, it simply allows you to cast a spell. If your Channelling Test fails, you cannot cast a spell this round.

INGREDIENTS

You use ingredients as normal. However, when surrounded by freezing conditions (*e.g.* the depths of winter, near a glacier, in a snowstorm), you fill with power, and all spells count as if an ingredient has been used in the casting. If an ingredient is used on top of this, it provides no further bonus.

AUTOMATIC FAILURE

Like other spellcasters, rolling all ones on your Casting Roll results in automatic spell failure. However, when in Kislev (including the Troll Country), instead of gaining a potential Insanity Point, you must roll on **Table 9-2: Glacial Surge** as the powerful magic moves beyond your control. Outside Kislev, you gain an Insanity Point as normal and do not roll on this table.

GLACIAL SURGE

In Kislev, you channel magic already “cleansed” by the Ancient Widow’s cold heart, so you are less susceptible to Tzeentch’s Curse; however, Ice Magic is a harsh mistress, and sometimes the flows are too strong for you to control.

When in Kislev (including the Troll Country), if you roll doubles, triples, or quadruples on your Casting Roll, or when you roll all ones, a huge flood of Ice Magic rises, and you must



WITCHES AND THE REALMS OF SORCERY

RoS introduces new magical practices to *WFRP*. Kislevite witches use the following:

Ice witches can create familiars and research rituals.

Hags can bind familiars and create potions (they do not need the Read/Write Skill to create potions—recipes have been passed orally between the hags for hundreds, if not thousands, of years).

roll on **Table 9–2: Glacial Surge** to determine what happens. Unless the table says otherwise, spells are still cast successfully if the Casting Number was achieved.

Outside Kislev, you use the Tzeentch's Curse rules as normal.

The effects of Glacial Surge always cause damage, even if a target is normally immune to cold attacks.

VARIABLE FLOWS

The flows of Ice Magic vary in strength. By Kislev's sites of power, along her leylines, and in the depths of winter, Ice Magic is very strong. But in warmer climes, it is far weaker and wanes the closer to the equator and the further from Kislev one travels. This variation is determined by the GM and uses the same modifiers as Variable Winds (*WFRP*, page 145).

TABLE 9–2: GLACIAL SURGE

Roll	Result
01–15	Chilled: Freezing magic stabs through you, stunning you for 1 round.
16–30	Slippery: The cold flow is too strong to channel effectively. Your spell takes twice as long to cast. You must take this time even if you failed to cast the spell.
31–45	Flood: Uncontrolled Ice Magic floods from you. The surrounding area suffers from the <i>permafrost</i> spell (page 120) for the next 1d5 days.
46–60	Uncontrolled: Bitter cold overwhelms you. You take 1d10 damage that ignores armour and Toughness Bonus. Your spell fails.
61–80	Ice Storm: A torrent of Ice Magic gushes upwards. Everyone within 24 yards (including you) suffers the effects of <i>hailstorm</i> (page 120) for 1d10 rounds.
81–90	Frozen: The cold flows threaten to freeze you. You suffer from the effects of <i>ice maiden's kiss</i> (page 120), and your spell fails.
91–99	Tzeentch Comes: The uncontrolled Ice Magic pierces through to the Aethyr. You suffer from Tzeentch's Curse as normal.
00	Frostfiend: A great spirit manifest from the uncontrolled Ice Magic. A Frostfiend (page 136) appears within 6 yards of you and attacks.

— WITCH MARKS —

Magic leaves its stamp upon those using it. Even the witches of Kislev—who avoid channelling the Winds of Magic directly—are at risk. Whenever you roll a double on Table 9–1: Fury of the Spirits or Table 9–2: Glacial Surge you gain a Witch Mark. Roll on the appropriate Witch Mark table and apply the results. If you roll the same mark twice, you should re-roll (unless the mark says otherwise).

TABLE 9–3: MARKS OF THE HAG WITCH

Roll	Result
01–10	Emaciated: The spirits leave your body wasted. You appear 2d10 years older, lose 20% of your body weight, and permanently reduce your Toughness Characteristic by –1d10. This mark can be gained three times.*
11–20	Club Foot: One of your feet painfully twists as the spirits age you. You appear 1d10 years older and permanently reduce your Movement Characteristic by 1. This mark can be gained twice.*
21–30	Palsy: The spirits leech your strength, leaving you prone to periodic fits of shaking. You appear 1d10 years older. Further, whenever you fail a Will Power or Toughness Test, the shakes begin, and for 1d10 rounds you suffer a –10 penalty to your Agility, Ballistic Skill, Fellowship, Strength, and Weapon Skill Characteristics and can only take a half action in combat.*
Roll	Result
31–40	Hoarse: Your voice is ruined as the spirits age you. You appear 1d10 years older, your voice grows hoarse, and you suffer a –10 penalty on all Charm Tests.*
41–50	Popping Bones: The spirits weaken your body. You appear 1d10 years older, and your bones make disturbing cracking noises whenever you move.*
51–60	Aged: The spirits age you 1d10 years. This mark can be gained multiple times.*

TABLE 9–3: MARKS OF THE HAG WITCH (CONTINUED)

- 61–70 **Spirit Companion:** You attract a spirit as a henchman. The GM determines the statistics for the spirit. Examples for appropriate statistics include Dryads (*OWB*, page 92), Glimmers (page 136), Spirits (*OWB*, page 109), Spites (*WC*, page 125), and Naiads (*WC*, page 123).
- 71–80 **Wise:** The spirits reveal the true nature of the world to you. Gain a +5 bonus to all Academic Knowledge Tests. This mark can be gained three times.
- 81–90 **Long-Lived:** The spirits nurture your ailing flesh. The first time you gain this mark, you will naturally live to at least 150 years. The second: 400 years. The third: you will never die of old age.
- 91–100 **Marked by the Spirits:** Your body is covered in peculiar tattoos. Gain a +10 bonus to Command Tests to control the spirits.

*See Table 9–4: Apparent Age (Optional)

TABLE 9–4: APPARENT AGE (OPTIONAL)

Use of their magic ages the hags. This aging is cosmetic and rarely influences your characteristics; however, appearing very old can change how others react. This table presents optional rules concerning your apparent age.

Apparent Age	Special Effects
16–30	Young: The spirits disrespect the young. Suffer a –10 penalty to Command Tests to control the spirits.
31–50	Middle Aged: No special effects.
51–60	Old: Your hair is grey, and your flesh is loose and wrinkled at every joint. Take a –10 penalty on Charm Tests to seduce but gain a +5 bonus to Command Tests (though not those to influence the spirits).
61–75	Very Old: Your hair is almost white, your teeth are yellow, and your flesh is loose, wrinkled, and mottled. You take a –30 penalty on Charm Tests to seduce but gain a +10 bonus to Command Tests (though not those to influence the spirits).
76–100	Ancient: Your hair is white, your remaining teeth are brown, and your wrinkled skin is saggy and hairy. You can no longer attempt Charm Tests to seduce and take a –20 penalty to all other Charm and Gossip Tests. However, the spirits respect age; gain a bonus of +10 on Command Tests to control them.
101–150	Truly Ancient: Your thin hair, black teeth, thick, yellow nails, and sagging, grey skin are disgusting to most people. You have the same special effects as Ancient , and you gain the Unsettling Talent.
151 or older	Hag Mother: You are impossibly old—a living embodiment of the Ancient Widow. You have the same special effects as Truly Ancient and also gain the Frightening Talent.

TABLE 9–5: MARKS OF THE ICE WITCH

Roll	Result
01–10	Frosty: You become cold and aloof. Permanently reduce your Fellowship Characteristic by –5.
11–20	Pyrophobe: You do not like fire. While within 12 yards of a burning torch or larger fire, you take a –10 penalty to Will Power Tests.
21–30	Rimed: An area of your body is encrusted with ice crystals. At the GM's discretion, you may suffer a –10 penalty on some Fellowship Tests.
31–40	Seasonal: You are bound to the passing seasons. During summer, you reduce your Wounds Characteristic by 2 and your Movement Characteristic by 1. In spring, you reduce your Wounds Characteristic by 1. In autumn, you increase your Wounds Characteristic by 1. In winter, you increase your Wounds Characteristic by 2 and your Movement Characteristic by 1.
41–50	Snowy: As a free action, you can make your skin and/or hair as white as snow, granting a +5 bonus to any Intimidate Tests on the following round.
51–60	Glacial: As a free action, you can make your skin feel as cold as ice. Suffer a –10 penalty to Charm Tests but gain a +10 bonus to Intimidate Tests when you do this.
61–70	Unfeeling: You suffer no damage from non-magical cold.
71–80	Icy Stare: Your cold gaze unnerves others. Gain the Unsettling Talent.
81–90	Frozen Heart: Fear is unknown to the ice in your heart. Gain the Fearless Talent.
91–100	Marked by Kislev: Ancient symbols of ice appear somewhere on your body (GM's choice). Gain a +10 bonus to Channelling Tests when using the Lore of Ice.

— THE GRIMOIRE —

Realm of the Ice Queen introduces many new spells to *WFRP*. To add these to your game, use the career system as normal with the following additional rules:

- Appropriate Petty Magic spells may be purchased for 100 xp each with the Extra Spell Talent.
- When you gain a Witch Lore Talent, you must choose an appropriate Spell List from your Witch Lore. The Spell Lists are found later in this chapter beside each Witch Lore.
- Extra Witch Lore Spells may be purchased for 100 xp each with the Extra Spell Talent.

STACKING SPELLS

Multiple castings of any spell do not offer cumulative bonuses. Thus, intoning two *blessings of Tor* over the same axe will only provide a +1 bonus to damage.

PETTY MAGIC

If your character has Petty Magic (Ice) or Petty Magic (Hag), you gain access to the appropriate list of 6 spells from **Table 9–6: Petty Magic Spell Lists**. Divine spellcasters in Kislev use the standard Petty Magic (Divine) spell list found in *WFRP* and *Tome of Salvation (ToS)*. Two new Petty Magic spells (denoted with an *) are provided for each of Kislev's primary magical traditions. These can be purchased with the Extra Spell Talent.

DAZHINYI SPELLS

Some factions in the Cult of Dazh teach the following spells.

BLESSING OF DAZH

Casting Number: 7

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)

Range: Touch (You)

Ingredient: A firebird's feather (+1)

Description: The target you touch becomes blessed with Dazh's favour. For the duration of the spell, the target takes half damage (rounding up) from any source of fire, after reducing the damage by other normal means.

BLESSING OF FIRE

Casting Number: 4

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 hour (special)

Range: 2 yards (1 square)

Ingredient: A fistful of hearth ash (+1)

Description: Your prayers summon a welcoming campfire that appears anywhere within range. It does not consume any fuel, does not ignite flammable material, but does emit

heat that warms living flesh (and living flesh only). The spell ends if any living creature draws close enough to be damaged by the heat.

PETTY MAGIC (HAG) SPELLS

Many hag witches practice the following spells.

CHARMED

Casting Number: 6

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds) (special)

Range: Touch (You)

Ingredient: A drop of your blood (+1)

Description: You attract tiny spirits of good fortune to your smeared blood. Whenever the target expends a Fortune Point, roll 1d10. On a roll of 8, 9, or 10, the Fortune Point works as normal but is not spent. *Charmed* immediately ends upon successfully saving the Fortune Point.

CURSE

Casting Number: 6

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 day

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: A fingernail from the victim (+1)

Description: You speak terrible words, invoking the spirits to curse a single target within range. The target is entitled to a Will Power Test to resist the spirits' influence. The curse is annoying and is in no way lethal nor causes any penalties aside from some mild discomfort and perhaps a minor penalty on Fellowship Tests (no more than –10, at the GM's discretion). Example curses include: warts, boils, change in hair colour, uncontrollable flatulence, smelly feet, and nasty rashes.

RESIST CORRUPTION

Casting Number: 7

Casting Time: Full action

TABLE 9–6: PETTY MAGIC SPELL LISTS

Petty Magic (Ice)	Petty Magic (Hag)
Drop	Curse*
Gust*	Drop
Glowing Light	Ghost Step
Magic Dart	Ill Fortune
Protection from Rain	Marsh Lights
Shock	Sounds

NEW TALENT: EXTRA SPELL

Description: Your deeper studies into magic grant you the ability to cast a spell not on your Spell List. Extra Spell is unusual in that it is not one talent but many, and each must be acquired individually. Each Extra Spell Talent gives you access to a single spell, noted in parenthesis; for example: Extra Spell (*crystal cloak*). This spell must come from your magical lore or be a petty spell taught by your peers, so you must have an appropriate Witch Lore or Petty Magic Talent before you can take Extra Spell. Taking this talent requires your GM's permission.

Duration: 1 hour

Range: 2 yards (1 square)

Ingredient: Spittle (+1)

Description: You utter an invocation to the spirits to gain their protection from the Ruinous Powers. One target, whom you must spit upon, gains a +10 bonus to any test resisting Chaos, including mutation and the powers of Chaos Magic.

PETTY MAGIC (ICE) SPELLS

These spells are known by many ice witches.

CHILL

Casting Number: 6

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 day

Range: Touch

Ingredient: An ice ball (+1)

Description: Your touch leaves a gleaming frost behind. Use the small template. The air within the template drops to freezing for the duration.

WINTER WALK

Casting Number: 7

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 hour

Range: You

Ingredient: A snow shoe (+1)

Description: You demand the winter spirits grant you passage. You take no penalties to movement from blizzards, snow drifts, icy surfaces, and similar.

TORINYI SPELLS

Some of Tor's priests know the following blessings.

BLESSING OF STORM'S APPROACH

Casting Number: 7

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)

Range: 48 yards (24 squares)

Ingredient: Wood from a lightning-struck tree (+1)

Description: Your prayers change the quality of the air, fooling sensitive animals into believing a storm is coming. Small creatures and herd beasts automatically run from the priest and will hide or huddle in a tight group. Other animals, or those controlled by another, must pass an Easy (+20) Will Power Test or flee.

BLESSING OF TOR

Casting Number: 4

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A silver Torinyi amulet (+1)

Description: Energy crackles over the weapon, imbuing it with the favour of Tor. The weapon deals +1 damage for the duration of the spell.

URSUNYI SPELLS

The following prayers are known to some priests of Ursun.

BLESSING OF THE LICKED PAW

Casting Number: 3

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch (You)

Ingredient: Bear saliva (+1)

Description: You growl a plea to Ursun to lessen a wound's pain. The target counts as if medical attention has been received.

BLESSING OF URSUN

Casting Number: 4

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)

Range: Touch (You)

Ingredient: A fresh fish (+1)

Description: Your prayers grant the target a +10 bonus to all Navigation and Outdoor Survival Tests taken on the oblast or during a snowy winter.

LESSER MAGIC

With GM permission, the following spells may be purchased by any career with the Lesser Magic Talent.

GHOST SHIELD

Casting Number: 12

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: 1 hour/Magic (special)

Range: 4 yards (2 squares)

Ingredient: A circle of salt (+2)

Description: You form an invisible shield around you that repels spirits. No creature with the Ethereal Trait may move within the spell's range. Any Ethereal creatures inside the shield must move out on their next action. If you move, *ghost shield* ends. Variations of this spell are taught by all Kislevite magical traditions.

GLAMOUR

Casting Number: 16

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 hour/Magic

Range: You

Ingredient: A winter rose (+2)

Description: Your magic disguises any deformity of appearance. You appear as an attractive version of yourself no older than mid-twenties and may ignore any negative modifiers to your Fellowship derived from appearance changes sourced from old age, mutations, Divine Marks, Arcane Marks, Witch Marks, Chaos Side Effects, or similar. Every round you are significantly jostled you must test Will Power Test or the spell ends. This spell may be the source of the disturbing tales of hags seducing men in the distant corners of the oblast.

TAP

Casting Number: 14

Casting Time: 1d10 minutes

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A vial of purified or blessed water (+2)

Description: You draw magical power from an ancient sacred site, such as an Ogham, stone circle, or sacred grove, and you use it to power a ritual. You may roll an extra die to determine your Casting Total for a ritual if you cast it immediately after a successful use of *tap*. This extra die does not contribute towards determining Tzeentch's Curse, the Wrath of God, or similar. Versions of this spell are known by many ice witches and several of the Kislevite cults.

VAZILA

Casting Number: 4

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 hour/Magic

Range: 100 yards (50 squares)

Ingredient: A horse shoe (+1)

Description: You immediately know if anyone attempts to steal your horse. In Kislev, it is believed spirits called Vazila guard over horses and contact the spellcaster if necessary. Variations of this spell are known by all Kislevite magical traditions.

— WITCH LORES —

When you gain access to a Witch Lore, you must choose one of the three lists of spells provided for your lore. You have access to all spells on that list but no others. You may learn spells on other lists in your lore with the Extra Spell Talent.

THE LORE OF THE HAGS

The Ungol hag witches have dealt with Kislev's spirits for countless generations. In that time, several distinct traditions have formed. The *koldunja*, or spirit witches, are hags who tend the spirits of the land and are called upon when the spirits need placating, banishing, or summoning. The *vorozheja*, or fate witches, specialise in communicating with spirits of fortune and are consulted by those wishing to know the future. The *znarkharja*, or folk witches, ward against the influence of Chaos and tend all manner of ailments plaguing their communities. But no matter what ancient traditions a hag practices, all are known for one power above all others: their ability to curse their enemies.

GMs should modify the following lists to suit their campaigns and are encouraged to create new lists and spells for unique characters.

BANISH SPIRIT

Casting Number: 16

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: Permanent

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: An elk's internal organs (+2)

Description: Select one creature with the Ethereal Trait. Unless the creature wins an opposed Will Power Test against you, it vanishes into the Aethyr or from wherever it came.

CLEANSE BODY

Casting Number: 13

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A fistful of fish guts (+2)

Description: Your target eats the fish guts as you cackle your spell. The guts attract healing spirits to help drive out bad spirits of disease and hurt. If the fish guts are kept down (which requires the target pass a Will Power Test), and you succeed on a Will Power Test, you expel one disease spirit from the target (you heal one disease), and you heal the target of a number of Wounds equal to 1d5 plus your Magic Characteristic.

TABLE 9-7: LORE OF THE HAGS SPELL LISTS

Koldunja	Vorozheja	Znarkharja
Banish Spirit	Cursed Pledge	Cleanse Body
Command Spirit	Deny Spirit	Cleanse Soul
Cursed Pledge	Fortune Told	Cursed Pledge
Deny Spirit	Hag's Curse	Haunting
Haunting	Haunting	Deny Spirit
Form of the Ancient Widow	Greater Curse	Greater Curse
Greater Curse	Lucky Claw	Resist Chaos
Summon Spirit	Past Revealed	Whispers of Taint



CLEANSE SOUL

Casting Number: 24

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A cup of bear's urine (+3)

Description: The target drinks the bear's urine, allowing you to attack any spirits of the Dark Gods inhabiting him. Make a Challenging (–10) Will Power Test. If the target is living and willing, the test is successful, and if the target succeeds on a Challenging (–10) Toughness Test, he loses one mutation of your choice. However, the power of Chaos is not easily dismissed; the mutation returns if the target ever fails a Toughness Test by 30 or more.

COMMAND SPIRIT

Casting Number: 11

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: A fox's brain (+2)

Description: You bend a spirit to your will. The spirit must win an opposed Will Power Test against you or fall under your control for the duration. You can now force it to do any Basic Action. If you pass an Academic Knowledge (Spirits) Test (requiring a Use a Skill half action), you can also force the spirit to use a special ability or Advanced Action.

CURSED PLEDGE

Casting Number: 18

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: Immediate (or until the deed is completed)

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: An item personal to the target (+2)

Description: You demand the target enact a deed or suffer your wrath. The target is entitled to a Challenging (–10) Will Power Test to resist your command. On a failed test, the target immediately suffers the effects of the *greater curse* spell if he does not enact the deed (as determined by the GM). Targets commanded to hurt themselves or act in a manner that would harm them receive a +30 bonus to their test.

DENY SPIRIT

Casting Number: 12

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: Permanent

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: A newt's spine (+2)

Description: Place the centre of the large template anywhere within range. One spirit beneath the template must win an opposed Will Power Test against you or on its next action, it must move beyond the affected area. Thereafter, the spirit cannot re-enter the area unless it succeeds on the opposed Will Power Test. Once it succeeds, it is no longer hampered by this spell.



FORM OF THE ANCIENT WIDOW

Casting Number: 26

Casting Time: 3 full actions

Duration: Special

Range: You

Ingredient: Two fistfuls of Kislevite earth soaked in your fresh blood (+3)

Description: You invite the Ancient Widow's most powerful spirits within you. You transform, along with your trappings, into a grey-haired monstrosity over eight feet in height, with glowing eyes, rusted metal teeth, and long, iron talons. You gain a +20 bonus to Weapon Skill, Strength, and Toughness Tests and +1 Attack. You also gain the Fearless, Frightening, Keen Senses, and Natural Weapons Traits. *Form of the Ancient Widow* ends when you take a Critical Hit, go to sleep, or when you end the spell voluntarily with a full action.

FORTUNE TOLD

Casting Number: 14

Casting Time: 1 hour

Duration: Special

Range: Special

Ingredient: An item directly applicable to the question asked (+2)

Description: Your eyes turn blue as you enter a trance (rendering you helpless) and commune with the spirits. Any single character may ask a single question about some future happening. The spirits convey the answer in a cryptic phrase (the GM may wish to use this opportunity to reveal hints about the adventure or future adventures). Once the spell is complete, the target may use the prophetic words to re-roll the next three failed tests directly related to his question (as determined by the GM). Your eyes return to normal once all three re-rolls are used. You may only have one instance of *fortune told* active at a time.

GREATER CURSE

Casting Number: 16

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: Immediate

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: An item personal to the target (+2)

Description: You call the spirits to curse someone. A target is entitled to a Challenging (–10) Will Power Test to resist the curse. Choose a curse as directed in the **Sample Curses** sidebar. A target can only suffer from one *greater curse* at a time. You may lift a *greater curse* with a second casting of this spell against the same target.

HAG'S CURSE

Casting Number: 8

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A lock of the target's hair (+1)

SAMPLE CURSES

From minor nuisances such as boils or flatulence, to greater blights such as disease or premature old age, the range of curses employed by the hag witches is almost endless.

When you learn the *greater curse* spell, you gain access to one of the following curses. You may learn more for 100 xp each (however, the GM may require you learn the curse from another hag first). GMs are encouraged to create unique curses for their games and are directed to the curses in *Lure of the Liche Lord* for inspiration.

Hag's Curse

You are cursed to age at an incredible rate as the Ancient Widow's spirits leech your youth. Your hair greys and lengthens, your nails yellow and extend, your muscles atrophy, and your eyes and mind weaken. Each day, you must succeed on a Routine (+10) Toughness Test or reduce all characteristics by 1. This aging continues until you reach a maximum of –20. At that point, you must pass a Routine (+10) Toughness test each day or die of old age.

Misfortune Curse

Malign spirits dog your every step, tripping you at important moments, poking your eyes when you need to see, and forcing you to bark obscenities when you try to be charming. Whenever you roll percentile dice, always count the highest roll as the tens and the lowest as the units.

Madness Curse

Tiny, malicious spirits settle in your mind. Each day you must pass a Routine (+10) Will Power Test or gain 1 Insanity Point. Once you acquire an insanity, the malicious spirits cease their torments.

Sickness Curse

This curse attracts disease spirits. Each day you must pass a Routine (+10) Toughness Test or contract one disease of the GM's choice. This curse only imposes one disease at a time.

Witch's Curse

Spirits swirl around you, wearing away at the barrier between the material realm and the Aethyr. Whenever you cast a spell, roll two extra dice that do not add to the Casting Roll. These dice instead count toward Tzeentch's Curse.

Description: The spirits grant you insight into the target's fate. If the target does not have a Hag's Curse already, roll for one on **Table 8–4: The Hag's Curse** on page 91. Further, you gain a +10 bonus on your next Intimidate or Torture Test against the target as your foreknowledge taps into something deep within the target, unnerving him.

HAUNTING

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: 2 full actions
Duration: Ingredient

HAUNTINGS

Kislev has always been a haunted land. All manner of spirits gather in its dark forests, open oblast, and high mountains. The hags have long treated with these entities and have learned ways to attract and influence them, allowing them to curse an area with bad luck, nightmares, or worse. Most hag mothers attract spirits to haunt the territory about their homes. However, they are careful to ensure there is a safe path through, for they are not immune to the effects of *haunting*.

When you learn the *haunting* spell, you gain access to one of the following curses. You may learn further curses for 100 xp each (with the GM's permission, who may require you learn the curse from another hag). GMs are encouraged to create unique curses for their games.

Cursed

Simple—but malicious—spirits haunt the area and punish any that draw close. Those who enter this haunted location must test Will Power or suffer from a *curse* (page 113) with effects determined by the GM.

Distracting Curse

Minor spirits flit through the area, tugging at extremities. This aggravation is distracting and annoying, resulting in a –10 penalty to all Agility, Ballistic Skill, Weapon Skill, and Perception Tests (and any others the GM feels is appropriate) while in the area. Further, no one can sleep in the area, and casting spells is impossible if you do not have the Meditation Talent.

Mishap Curse

Childish spirits giggle through the place, unhitching buckles, loosing belts, pulling down pants, lifting skirts, and pinching bottoms. Each round, you must succeed on a Will Power Test or suffer from a mishap as determined by the GM.

Nightmare Curse

After five minutes sleeping in the cursed area, you suffer from terrible nightmares as spirits rip through your mind. Unless you pass a Will Power Test, you scream out as you awaken, alerting others of your position. Further, for the hour after waking you take a –05 penalty on Agility, Ballistic Skill, and Weapon Skill Tests as you shake uncontrollably, reliving the awful experience.

Rotting Curse

Spirits of decay are drawn to the cursed locale. Any perishables rot quickly. Fresh food moulders in minutes, preserves may last as long as an hour, and other materials rust, decompose, or corrode in little more than a day (as determined by the GM).

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A fist-sized item from the target location (+2)

Description: You curse a specified building (or section of it, for large buildings) or small geographical feature (such as a hill or copse) to attract malevolent spirits. Choose a curse as directed in the **Hauntings** sidebar. A target can only suffer from one *haunting* at a time.

LUCKY CLAW

Casting Number: 11

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 hour/Magic (or when used)

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A three-legged dog's claw (+2)

Description: You attract a luck spirit to the ingredient and bind it there. Whoever bears the claw gains +1 Fortune Point. The claw disintegrates when used or when the spell ends. You cannot benefit from more than one *luck* spell at a time.

PAST REVEALED

Casting Number: 20

Casting Time: 3 full actions

Duration: Special

Range: You

Ingredient: An item directly applicable to the question asked (+2)

Description: Your eyes turn red as you enter a trance and see the past through a crimson haze. Whilst in the trance, you are helpless. To receive a vision, you must first ask a question of the spirits (e.g. *What happened here three years ago?* or *How did this man die?*). However, as the vision comes from the point of view of local spirits (which may include the dead, nature spirits, malignant spites, or similar), the results are often confusing and unsure. The exact details of the vision are left in the hands of the GM, who is encouraged to be inventive with his descriptions of the trance vision (which lasts as long as the GM determines necessary or until you end the spell). If you have *fortune told* cast when you use this spell, one eye will be red and the other blue.

RESIST CHAOS

Casting Number: 17

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: A snowy owl's gizzard (+2)

Description: Your incantation summons spirits that hate the Dark Gods of the north. *Resist Chaos* affects you and a number of targets equal to twice your Magic Characteristic that are within range. Unwilling targets are entitled to a Hard (–20) Will Power Test to negate the effect. Those affected gain the Resistance to Chaos Talent. All affected spellcasters, including you, may not cast any spells.

SUMMON SPIRIT

Casting Number: 12

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: 1d10 minutes

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: As determined by the GM for the type of spirit summoned (+2)

Description: You summon a spirit to an unoccupied spot within the spell's range. Examples for appropriate statistics for spirits you can summon include Dryads (*OWB*, page 92), Glimmers (page 136), Spirits (*OWB*, page 109), Spites (*WC*, page 125), and Naiads (*WC*, page 123). You must succeed on a Will Power Test to control the spirit. If you fail, the GM controls it, and it may be displeased.

WHISPERS OF TAINT

Casting Number: 12

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 hour/Magic

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: The hand of a worshipper of the Dark Gods (+2)

Description: The spirits whisper dire warnings whenever servants of the Dark Gods or things tainted by their evil draw near. Whenever such a creature, thing, or area moves within range of the spell, you gain +20 to any relevant Magical Sense Test.

THE LORE OF ICE

The ice witches of Kislev practice traditions founded long before the Gospodars migrated across the Worlds Edge Mountains. Witches from the noble bloodlines are taught the old ways of their Khan-Queen ancestors and learn spells to manipulate the great ice spirits of the land and spells of rulership and war. The common folk, by comparison, are less concerned with regal ice spirits and instead practice spells manipulating the cold magic that saturates the oblast (oblast witch). Lastly, ice witches guarding the leylines and ancient Oghams of Kislev learn spells to control the freezing flows of magic that flood those powerful places (ley witch).

GMs should modify these lists to suit their campaigns and are encouraged to create their own lists and spells for unique characters.

BITING WIND

Casting Number: 23

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: Instant

Range: 36 yards (18 squares)

Ingredient: A white dragon's fang (+3)

Description: You channel mighty flows of magic into a howling gale of cold. Anyone between you and your target is slashed by wind-whipped ice shards dealing 1d10+4 damage. In addition, creatures that lost at least 1 Wound from this spell must pass a Strength Test or fall to the ground, prone. *Biting wind* is a *magic missile*.

BLIZZARD

Casting Number: 18

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 round/Magic

Range: Special

Ingredient: A snow flake (+2)

Description: A swirling flurry of snow and ice rises from the land, freezing and blinding all in its path. You can cast *blizzard* at any point you can see. Distant targets may require a Perception Test to see clearly, as dictated by the GM. Those within 24 yards of the target take 1d10 damage every round (roll damage once, and apply the result to everyone in the area) and reduce their line of sight to 6 yards (3 squares). *Blizzard* also imposes a -20 penalty to the Ballistic Skill and Agility Tests of all in the area and reduces movement by half.

CHILL VOICE

Casting Number: 9

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic

Range: You

Ingredient: A tongue carved of ice (+1)

Description: You speak with the pitiless chill of the Khan-Queens of old. Gain a +10 bonus on all Command, Haggle, Intimidate, and Torture Tests, but take a -10 penalty to all Blather and Charm Tests.

CRYSTAL CLOAK

Casting Number: 15

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)

Range: You

Ingredient: An ermine (+2)

Description: You call forth a swirling, shimmering, ice-laden mist and wrap it around you. Anyone within 2 yards takes a -10 penalty to Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, and Agility Tests as the cloak's cold seeps into them. Further, anyone trying to attack you in melee combat must pass a Toughness Test. Those who fail back away from the intense chill, losing their action for the round.

DEATH FROST

Casting Number: 25

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

Ingredient: A chip of stone from Urszebya (+3)

Description: You call up lethal cold from the land. A target that your touch must succeed on a Hard (-20) Toughness Test or take 1d10+8 damage per point of your Magic Characteristic. This damage ignores armour. On a successful test, the target only takes 1d10+2 damage per point of your Magic Characteristic instead. Critical Hits caused by *death frost* use the Sudden Death rules with death indicating the target is frozen solid.

FROST BLADE

Casting Number: 8

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 round/Magic (special)

Range: You

Ingredient: A yard-long icicle (+2)

Description: A sparkling blade of ice forms in your hand. It counts as a magic weapon with the Precise Quality and deals 1d10+2+SB damage. It immediately melts away if you let go of it. At the end of the spell's duration, you can retain the blade with a successful Will Power Test each round thereafter.

FORM OF THE FROSTFIEND

Casting Number: 27

Casting Time: 3 full actions

Duration: Special

Range: You

Ingredient: A Frostfiend's claw (+3)

Description: You invite the cold spirits of old within you to transform yourself, along with your trappings, into a shrieking, taloned Frostfiend. You retain your Intelligence and Willpower, but your other characteristics are that of a Frostfiend (page 136). You also gain all of the skills, talents, and traits of the Frostfiend. However, you may not communicate in anything other than howls, cannot cast spells, and cannot wield weapons. *Form of the Frostfiend* ends when you take a Critical Hit, go to sleep, or when you end the spell voluntarily with a full action.

HAILSTORM

Casting Number: 14

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic

Range: 18 yards (9 squares)



Ingredient: A hailstone (+2)

Description: You channel Ice Magic upwards, forming large chunks of ice that fall to the ground with horrifying speed. Use the large template. All creatures beneath the template take 1d10+2 damage each round they remain in the area. Also, they reduce their range of sight to just 4 yards, take a -20 penalty to Ballistic Skill and Agility Tests, and halve their movement. As a full action and with a successful Challenging (-10) Will Power Test, you can move the hailstorm 2 yards per point of your Magic Characteristic.

HAWKS OF MISKA

Casting Number: 18

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: Special

Range: 36 yards (18 squares)

Ingredient: A crystal hawk (+2)

Description: By calling upon pacts sealed by the first Khan-Queens, you summon the *Hawks of Miska*, frozen spirits of fear, hatred, and dread. The icy birds crystallise from the air and swoop around the target, loosing fearful cries. Use the large template. All those in the area must pass Fear Tests, and those within 10 yards of the template must pass a Routine (+10) Fear Test. *Hawks of Miska* lasts until everyone affected has passed their Fear Test.

ICE MAIDEN'S KISS

Casting Number: 20

Casting Time: Full Action

Duration: Instant

Range: Cone template

Ingredient: A handful of snow (+2)

Description: You breathe forth purest cold, freezing foes into glittering statues of ice. Those affected take 1d10+5 damage that ignores armour. Use the Sudden Death rules (death results in a frozen statue) for Critical Hits. Any that survive must succeed at a Will Power Test or be stunned for 1 round.

ICE SHEET

Casting Number: 12

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic

Range: 24 yards (12 squares)

Ingredient: A one-foot-square sheet of ice (+2)

Description: You glaze an area with a thin layer of slippery ice. Use the large template. Those in the area must succeed on a Challenging (-10) Agility Test every time they attempt an action involving movement, or they slip and fall, taking 1d10 damage, and lose the rest of their turn. A success means the character can act normally but at half movement.

PERMAFROST

Casting Number: 20

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: 1 day/Magic

Range: 48 yards (24 squares)

Ingredient: A frozen chunk of tundra (+2)

Description: You channel mighty flows of cold into the land. A heavy frost immediately crusts over every affected surface, halving all movement for those in or moving through the area. On the round of casting (and that round only), anyone affected also takes 1d10 damage that ignores armour and must succeed on a Strength Test or lose their next half action. After one minute, all water in the area freezes.

SHARDSTORM

Casting Number: 18

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: Instant

Range: 48 yards (24 squares)

Ingredient: A handful of ice (+2)

Description: You unleash 1d10 diamond-hard shards of ice at a target. Each shard is a *magic missile* dealing 1d10+3 damage.

SHOIKA'S CALL

Casting Number: 15

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic

Range: 36 yards (18 squares)

Ingredient: A handful of icicles (+2)

Description: You call out to the Ancient Widow, reminding her of her promises to Khan-Queen Shoika, first Tzarina of Kislev, and cause 20-foot tendrils of ice erupt from the ground. Use the large template. Movement through this area is halved. Any creature in the area must succeed on an Agility Test each round, or the tendrils wrap around it and deal 1d10+4 damage that ignores armour. In addition, the character is considered grappled—to break free, he must win an opposed Strength Test. The tendril counts as having a Strength equal to your Intelligence Characteristic.

WALK THE ENDLESS STEPPE

Casting Number: 15

Casting Time: 2 full actions

TABLE 9–8: LORE OF ICE SPELL LISTS

Khan-Queen	Oblast Witch	Ley Witch
Chill Voice	Blizzard	Biting Wind
Crystal Cloak	Form of the Frostfiend	Blizzard
Frost Blade	Ice Maiden's Kiss	Crystal Cloak
Form of the Frostfiend	Ice Sheet	Death Frost
Hawks of Miska	Permafrost	Frost Blade
Ice Maiden's Kiss	Shardstorm	Hailstorm
Shardstorm	Walk the Endless Steppe	Permafrost
Shoika's Call	Wall of Ice	Wall of Ice

Duration: 1 day/Magic

Range: You

Ingredient: A ball of frozen bear fat (+2)

Description: You lower the temperature of your body. You are immune to exposure caused by freezing conditions and are immune to damage from cold-based attacks.

WALL OF ICE

Casting Number: 12

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: A foot-long slab of ice (+2)

Description: You form a wall of snowy ice from the ground. You may create a straight wall up to 10 yards long and 6 yards high, all of which must be within the spell's range and may not pass through an area emanating any warmth (living bodies, fire, and similar, as dictated by the GM). The wall blocks line of sight and has TB 5 and 10 Wounds per point of your Magic Characteristic. Fire deals double damage to the wall.

— DIVINE LORES —

This section presents new Divine Lores for Dazh, Tor, and Ursun. As these cults teach many rites and rituals, GMs are encouraged to create new spells and spell lists to suit their games and are directed to *Tome of Salvation* for inspiration.

THE LORE OF DAZH

Dazh is the God of fire, the sun, and hospitality. He has been worshipped in the lands of Kislev for uncounted centuries and is believed to have taught early Ungol tribesmen the secrets of fire. Priests of Dazh are warm-hearted individuals who take deep pride in their hearths and homes, and many bedeck themselves in sacred gold. Those who call upon Dazh often prefer heat to cold and may feel uncomfortable when the sun sets.

BRILLIANCE

Casting Number: 12

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: Instant

Range: 6 yards (3 squares)

Ingredient: A Dazhinyi holy symbol (+2)

Description: Your prayers summon a blinding wave of holy fire. All creatures within range must pass an Agility Test or be dazzled by the fire. Affected creatures take a –20 penalty on Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Agility, and Perception Tests for 1d10 rounds. Targets without eyes, or who have shielded their eyes, are immune to *brilliance*.

DAZH SZHEG!

Casting Number: 14
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: Instant
Range: 18 yards (9 squares)
Ingredient: A gold magnifying glass (+2)
Description: You call upon Dazh to burn his enemies, and a beam of holy light engulfs your opponents. Use the small template. All creatures in the area must succeed on a Challenging (–10) Agility Test or take 1d10+4 damage that ignores armour. A target that loses 1 or more Wounds also catches fire.

DANCE OF THE ALARI

Casting Number: 8
Casting Time: 2 full actions
Duration: 1 hour/Magic
Range: 1 league (3 miles)
Ingredient: A gilded lodestone (+1)
Description: You ask Dazh to illuminate the night, and he answers with his warrior-consorts—the Alari. The northern sky lights up with eerie fires as the Alari dance. This illumination is enough light to see by.

ROUSE THE COALS

Casting Number: 7
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: Instant
Range: 2 yards (1 square)
Ingredient: A lump of coal (+1)
Description: You utter a prayer celebrating Dazh awakening from his bed of coals in the east. Your target, if flammable (as determined by the GM), immediately bursts into flames.

SACRED GUEST

Casting Number: 5
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: Special
Range: Special
Ingredient: A Dazhinyi prayer parchment (+1)
Description: You invoke Dazh to bless your time as a guest in another's home. If your host abuses his position or is a poor host, Dazh curses him. The curse, which is decided by the GM, could include: fires failing to light, fires giving no heat, or fuel burning at quadruple rate. The curse lasts until the host apologises to you or prays for forgiveness at a Temple of Dazh.

WREATH OF FLAME

Casting Number: 13
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 round/Magic
Range: You
Ingredient: A flame carved of gold (+2)
Description: Your chants wreath your body in holy flame. Anyone attempting to strike you with a handheld

weapon must succeed on a Will Power Test or take a –30 penalty to his Weapon Skill Test as the heat drives him back from the attack. Even a successful test imposes a –10 penalty. Whilst *wreath of flame* is in effect, you are immune to all damage from fire-based attacks.

THE LORE OF TOR

Tor is the God of thunder, lightning, and war. He is popular amongst the war-like Kislevites and was worshipped in the area long before the Gospodars arrived. Priests of Tor are often taciturn and belligerent, and many wield war axes detailed in sacred silver. Those who call upon Tor can be quick to anger, and many are drawn to high locations, such as mountains or tall towers.

At the GM's whim, any use of Torinyi prayers involving thunder, lightning, or rain may bring on a full storm.

CALL OF TOR

Casting Number: 16
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: 1 round
Range: 1 mile
Ingredient: A Torinyi holy symbol (+2)
Description: You bellow prayers skywards, and Tor responds with a great peal of thunder. Next round, all Kislevites in range attack twice on a charge action. However, Tor does not allow this prayer to be used lightly: you automatically suffer from the Wrath of God if your Casting Roll fails.

CLEAVE THE SKY

Casting Number: 15
Casting Time: Half action
Duration: 1 day/Magic
Range: 1 league (3 miles)
Ingredient: A vial of blessed rainwater (+2)
Description: You invoke Tor to cleave the sky with his mighty war axe. Clouds roil high above, and after 1d10 rounds, a heavy downpour of rain, sleet, snow, or hail (as appropriate) begins. Each round, all affected targets must pass a Strength Test, or their movement is halved. *Cleave the sky* may only be attempted if the sky is already overcast.

DO TOR!

Casting Number: 11
Casting Time: Full action
Duration: Instant
Range: 12 yards (6 squares)
Ingredient: A silver lightning bolt (+1)
Description: You entreat Tor to unleash his fury, and a bolt of lightning streaks towards your target. *Do Tor!* is a *magic missile* that deals 1d10+3 damage that ignores armour. If the target is killed, the lightning arcs to another enemy (if any remain) within 4 yards of the target and continues to do so until a target survives.

INCOMING STORM

Casting Number: 9

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 5 minutes/Magic

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: A Torinyi prayer parchment (+1)

Description: Your prayers increase the tension in the air, preparing those around you for an incoming conflict. Whenever any character within range of the spell when it was cast is surprised, he may immediately attempt a Routine (+10) Will Power Test to overcome surprise and act normally.

THUNDER OF WAR

Casting Number: 12

Casting Time: Full Actions

Duration: Instant

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: A silver-plated cymbal (+2)

Description: Your prayers amplify the sounds of all nearby conflicts. All enemies within range must succeed on a Fear Test.

TOR'S FURY

Casting Number: 6

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic

Range: You

Ingredient: A whetstone (+1)

Description: You entreat Tor to bless your war efforts. When using an axe, every time you roll a 10 for damage, it automatically results in Ulric's Fury without you having to roll to hit again.

THE LORE OF URSUN

Ursun is the God of bears and patron of Kislev. His cult was introduced by the Gospodars almost a thousand years ago and is now the most powerful in the land. Priests of Ursun tend to be wild individuals, and many wear sacred skins and holy bear bones. Those calling upon Ursun are often uncomfortable around the trappings of civilisation and frequently grow lethargic in winter.

FATHER BEAR

Casting Number: 9

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic

Range: 12 yards (24 squares)

Ingredient: A bear's tongue (+1)

Description: Your prayer stirs one of Ursun's servants. One bear within range will not attack unless attacked and will answer any questions you pose it, drawing from its own knowledge (not Ursun's). Its voice is sonorous and noble, and it speaks in the mother tongue of the priest. This prayer does not work on spellcasters using *form of the raging bear*.

GROWLING FURY

Casting Number: 9

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)

Range: You

Ingredient: A claw from a bear killed by trapping (+1)

Description: Your chants fill you with implacable, ferocious rage. You gain the Menacing and Frenzy Talents and a +10 bonus to Will Power and Toughness Tests.

SKIN OF THE ICE BEAR

Casting Number: 10

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)/Magic

Range: You

Ingredient: An Ice Bear's canine (+1)

Description: Your prayers draw an Ice Bear's spirit within you. For the duration, all of your attacks deal +1 damage, and you gain the Keen Senses and Unsettling Traits. Finally, you gain a +10 bonus to Intimidate, Perception, and Outdoor Survival Tests.

UNYIELDING URSUN

Casting Number: 21

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)

Range: 36 yards (18 squares)

Ingredient: An ice bear's pelt (+3)

Description: Your rousing prayers tap deep into Kislevite national pride. All Kislevites within range gain the Fearless and Unsettling Traits.

URSINE STRENGTH

Casting Number: 8

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute (6 rounds)

Range: You

Ingredient: A bear's rib (+1)

Description: Your chant grants you some of Ursun's strength. You gain a +10 bonus on Strength Tests, another +10 bonus (for a total of +20) when grappling, and your unarmed attacks deal +1 damage.

WINTER'S SLEEP

Casting Number: 14

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1d10 rounds (per target)

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: A snowball (+2)

Description: Your prayers bring the deep sleep of winter upon your enemies. Use the small template. All living creatures in the area must succeed on a Challenging (–10) Will Power Test or fall into a deep sleep for 1d10 rounds. Sleeping characters are helpless.

ROUGH JUSTICE

"To find your enemy, look behind your friend"

—KISLEVITE PROVERB



Rough Justice is a short adventure designed to introduce players and characters to the Empty Quarter. It is suitable for parties from Kislev or from the Empire. Characters that have travelled so far from their Empire home will likely be battle-hardened and experienced, so two sets of opponents are provided, classified as "novice" and "veteran." Novices are assumed to be at the start of their first career, veterans to be in or near their third.

If you're using *Thousand Thrones*, this chapter would make for an excellent diversion whilst the PCs are making their way into Kislev.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

A month ago, a somewhat-addled, blood-and-thunder Ulrican friar, Brother Jurgen, stumbled into the remote stanitsa of Vitkal in the midst of a celebration of Dazh. He declared the nomads heretics and Chaos-worshippers and preached instead of the true worship of Ulric. Harsh words were exchanged, and then somebody threw a stone. The Ulrican fell backwards into the fire pit and was dead before anyone could reach him. Not unused to death, the Kislevites left the body in the wild and went on with their lives.

However, Jurgen was travelling with a young scribe who ran back to the cult with the news. By the time word reached the Empire, the tale had become one of the savage Northmen burning an innocent friar alive. After the Defenestration of Praag (for more information, see the section **The Temple of Dazh** page 68), such an insult to Ulric could not be forgiven, and word of the cult's displeasure was sent to the Temple of Ulric in Kislev. They were instructed to send agents to Vitkal to ensure that justice—Empire justice—was done to the

murderers as soon as possible. Agents of the embassy made sure to present the case to the Tzarina first, and she graciously granted her approval of this pursuance of law. However, not wishing to appear to the boyars as being easily swayed by foreign powers, she asked the embassy to conduct the pursuance with great subtlety and before the fast-approaching winter. Father Ludwig, a high-ranked Ulrican in the Empty Quarter—in fact, the brother of Brother Jurgen—has been chosen to head up the mission. He has selected a small group of Ulrican bodyguards and hired some Kislevite guides to help them through the oblast.

However, the Tzarina has many enemies, and her enemies have many spies. Boyar Todimir, a powerful noble who resents the Tzarina's rule, got wind of these events and realised they would be the perfect tool to discredit and embarrass the Ice Queen. He sent an agent on a fast horse to Vitkal. Disguised as a simple messenger, the agent convinced the town that the Tzarina has handed the townsfolk on a silver platter to suffer outsider justice. The stanitsa's wise woman, Baba Pogodya, was furious at this apparent attack on her people and their ways. She disappeared into the forest to make sure the Ulricans would never reach Vitkal at all. By invoking the spirits of the oblast, she intends to make their deaths appear to be of natural causes, thus avoiding any reparations and ensuring Vitkal is never disturbed again. The party is walking right into her deadly trap.

THE HAG'S PLAN

Baba Pogodya intends to use the spirits of Kislev against her enemies. She has torn out her right eye and cut off her right hand to make a deal with Leshii and Vodianoï, the spirits of

the forest and the river. The Leshii will turn the forest against the travellers, making them lose their weapons just before a pack of wolves descends upon them. The Vodianoï has cracked the ice across a small river and sits ready to pull down any who fall through. Finally, a blizzard blows in, driving the group to seek cover in nearby caves. There sleeps her pet Cave Bear, trained to attack on sight. These obstacles should be enough to kill most of the Ulricans and drive any survivors back home in terror, especially when the hag adds a few curses into the mix.

If the party contains any Ungols, Baba Pogodya will warn them before she sets the bear on them, but if they persist in aiding the traitors, she will not spare them her wrath.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure is assumed to start in the capital but can begin in any large city with a Temple of Ulric. It is up to you as GM to decide how best to involve the players. With winter fast approaching, the temple is not above hiring those with a potentially shady past. Heroic characters can be sent to right the great injustice, while anyone with any sense of duty to the cult can simply be ordered to go. Likewise, the chekist are keen to ensure the Tzarina's authority is not forgotten, so some Kislevites may be ordered to go along. This mission is at the behest of some powerful people, and its completion would cause those people to look favourably upon the characters. Finally, the cult is offering a lot of money (10 ducats each per day) for what seems like a very simple task. There shouldn't be too much difficulty persuading the characters to go along.

Whether contacted originally by Kislev or Ulrican officials, they are eventually directed to Father Ludwig at the temple. He greets them in the temple offices and briefly explains the travesty that was done to his brother (as he sees it), as well as the need for the Kislevite people to understand neither the Cult of Ulric nor the Empire are to be taken lightly. You may improvise or read the following

"Two months ago, one of the most enlightened members of the brethren of this great temple—Brother Jurgen—was travelling through the northern wastes preaching the holy word. When he reached the village of Vitkal, he was brutally attacked and killed. I have been appointed by the temple to travel to this village and see justice is done, that the perpetrators of this foul deed suffer the full process of our law. The Tzarina has granted me the right to enact justice—Empire justice—as I see fit. However, I need bodyguards and guides to ensure I reach Vitkal safely—it is a week's journey, and I am sure you have heard how dangerous the open country can be up here. It is your job to ensure I reach my destination, so the will of Ulric may be carried out."

Father Ludwig answers any questions the players have, though there is little else he tells because there is little else he thinks they should know. He gives them a quarter of their pay in

THE HAMMER OR THE BEAR

As mentioned, this adventure can be run for both Empire and Kislevite groups. If the PCs are all Kislevites, then Father Ludwig has a body of Ulrican warriors already equipped for the journey (see the sidebar for their stats) but needs some native people to talk to the Ungols, advise on the conditions, and help navigate the route. If the party is from the Empire, Ludwig has arranged for a small group of Kislevite guides (use the pre-generated PCs, or make your own) but is looking for some Empire muscle just in case things turn nasty, and the Kislevites prefer to be loyal to their land and not their payor.

A PARTY DIVIDED?

If the party is made up of Kislevites, it is likely some are Gospodars and some Ungols. How much this divide influences the game depends on the personalities of the characters involved. The journey takes Gospodars deep into the oblast where any Ungols should be far more at home, a situation that causes a reversal of the traditional power structure. Gospodars may grow increasingly angry at risking their lives to face threats that have nothing to do with their way of life, while Ungols may be angered by the assumptions and ignorance of their Gospodar companions. Both factors should cause some natural resentment between the two cultures and provide plenty of role-playing opportunities.

advance, as well as 15 ducats each to buy furs and equipment, should they lack any. The caravan rides out the next day at dawn; Father Ludwig expects them to be prompt.

PACKING UP YOUR OLD KIBITKA

Survival is always an issue when travelling in Kislev, doubly so this close to winter. Before leaving the city, you might want to give the characters a chance to shop for provisions (perhaps at Frica's Furs). They need a kibitka or yurt, furs, snowshoes, dried meat, fire-making equipment, and, of course, kvas. Characters should be discouraged from taking too much equipment by the time limit upon them.

The journey to Vitkal is approximately one hundred miles; an unencumbered group on horseback should reach it in six days, double that if on foot. If they ask before they leave, tell them the journey takes a week and to buy food and fuel accordingly.

You can gloss over the travel for much of the trip—the party only runs into bad luck when they are a day or two from Vitkal. However, you may describe the scenery around them, as the endless steppe becomes the starkly beautiful forest, and you might consider adding a random encounter (perhaps with kyzak or some Greenskins) to liven things up. The attack could also not be quite so random, with bandits riding through the camp to gather items for the baba's curses. For kyzak or the hag's agents, use the sell-swords from *WFRP*—one per character. For novices, use the stats as is, for veterans double the numbers.

Regardless, make sure the characters determine their sleeping arrangements, including guard shifts. Their fellow travellers help with these, except Father Ludwig. A few wolf howls and bear roars during the night should inspire them to keep a careful watch and light a strong fire, and it will serve to remind them the oblast is a very dangerous place. Finally, you should give the group some opportunities to talk to their fellow travellers.

BUILDING BRIDGES

On one particular night during the journey, the other group of travellers comes over to talk to the characters. If the characters are from the Empire, the Kislevite guides offer to share their kvas and teach them a Kislevite game involving throwing war-axes at marked trees (–20 to BS for hurling a non-throwing weapon, highest degree of success wins). They may also try to teach the Empire folk some of their Kislevite songs.

If the characters are Kislevites, Hichs—one of the devout Ulrican bodyguards—introduces himself in his best broken Kislevite and acts as translator for his fellows. He tries to explain the rules of the card game Tilean Queens, but the language barrier makes this impossible; the evening eventually devolves into singing and drinking—or the axe-throwing above if the PCs ask about any Kislevite games their characters might know.

The characters need to make **Speak Language (Reikspiel or Kislevarin) Tests** to communicate with their fellows.

Failing that, the players should act out how they are trying to communicate; you can then make **Intelligence Tests** to see if the meaning is understood. If it isn't, miscommunications are bound to happen, both humorous and insulting. At some point, have one of the NPCs draw his weapon and threaten the PCs. Combat will almost certainly be avoided, but it will get the PCs' attention!

This opportunity is also a good chance to throw in either a random, violent (but easy) encounter, as mentioned, or the scary wolf howls and other atmospheric details. Between all these occurrences, there is also a chance to find out more about Kislev or the old Ulrican's mission. The characters can make **Easy (+20) Gossip Tests** to do so, though you may wish to modify this number based on how successfully the language barrier was broken. The highest degree of success (and the character's nation of origin) will determine what is discovered.

Empire characters who talk to Father Ludwig about this or any other subject discover little beyond Ludwig's continued passion for the mission. He plays down any concerns about being unwelcome in Vitkal, saying he has papers to prove their legitimacy and the backing of the Tzarina. If the characters persist, he becomes enraged and accuses them of cowardice before he charges off to bed. Although Ludwig speaks good Kislevarin, he does not discuss the mission with any Kislevites; small talk is fine, but he tells anyone asking pointed questions that cult business is none of their concern. If they want more information, they'll have to try and communicate with Hichs and his men.

FIRESIDE GOSSIP

Degrees of Success	Information Obtained by Kislevite PCs
0	<i>I don't know about all this. I'm not sure we should be sticking our noses in here.</i>
1	<i>There's all sorts of stories going about how Jurgen died. He was a mad old drunk; he probably brought it on himself.</i>
2	<i>Jurgen was always stirring up trouble. From what I hear, he was preaching the word of Ulric in the middle of a festival for the fire God. No wonder they burned him.</i>
3	<i>Father Ludwig is Brother Jurgen's brother by blood. Ludwig's a fair man, but he can't see straight when it comes to his damn fool brother.</i>
Degrees of Success	Information Obtained by Empire PCs
0	<i>You Empire folk shouldn't be here. Kislev law for Kislev people!</i>
1	<i>Vitkal will not welcome us, even with the mark of the Tzarina. Out here, they have their own law.</i>
2 or more	<i>This is a fool's errand for a blind priest. When we get to Vitkal, if they don't try to kill us, we should just take our money and go our own way.</i>

DEADLY SLUMBER

When the party is within thirty miles of Vitkal, their bad luck begins. If one of the characters has taken the dawn watch, he sees four beautiful golden-feathered birds fly down and begin pecking amongst the remnants of the fire. A successful **Routine (+10) Common Knowledge (Kislev or Troll Country)** or **Academic Knowledge (Religion) Test** reveals they are Firebirds and the danger they present (see **Firebirds** on page 135). Those who are not in the know or who are asleep only become aware of the threat when their yurtas catch fire or when the morning watch makes everyone aware of what's happening.

Those in a burning yurtas need to make an **Easy (+20) Perception Test** to awaken and may add +10 to this with each round the yurtas burns. This test begins at **Average (+0)** if it is a yurtas nearby burning, instead. It takes as many rounds to beat out the fire with furs and blankets as it has previously been burning for. If a yurtas burns for six rounds or more, it is destroyed, along with anything non-metal in it. Kibitka or larger yurtas may survive, though they have to be repaired with a successful **Outdoor Survival Test**. If the yurtas is lost, the characters will just have to get to know their fellow travellers more intimately—sleeping outside in the cold is certain death.

Rather than beating out the flames, other characters may wish to attack the Firebirds or chase them away. As before, anyone making a **Common Knowledge (Kislev or Troll Country)**

or **Academic Knowledge (Religion)** roll knows that the birds are sacred to Dazh and must not be harmed. The Ulricans don't know this and launch wholeheartedly into slaughter if not prevented (the birds look like good eating, as well as being pests). If a Firebird is harmed, even unintentionally, no attempt to make a fire will ever be successful for the rest of the journey. This situation not only makes things very hard on those keeping guard, it also encourage predators to come into the camp. Scaring the Firebirds away requires an **Easy (+20) Intimidate Test**. Failure means the birds just look at the Human quizzically, as if wondering why he could be waving his arms like that.

While all this is going on, the Leshii spirit does his work. Any weapons not being held or inside a burning yurta simply vanish. Daggers, knives, and anything smaller are an exception. The disappearance does not seem mystical at first—someone else may have taken the wrong blade from the weapon tent, perhaps it slipped from the packs last night, or maybe the Ulrican who threw it down in disgust threw it harder than he thought, and so on. When several losses are discovered, Kislevite characters may make a **Challenging (–10) Academic Knowledge (Spirits) Test** to realise it is the work of a forest spirit playing games. If anyone makes this by two or more degrees of success, they knew the tradition well enough to carry a spare Leshii blade (see **Spirits, Small Gods, and Kislevite Oddities** on page 50).

The group has 10 minutes to decide what to do before the wolves arrive. Stories do say the Leshii's mischief is limited; the weapons are usually found under a tree nearby, eventually. If some of the party go to look for the weapons, they hear the screams of their fellows before they find anything. The wolves do not howl, and those at the campsite must make a **Perception Test** to realise something is coming. Success means they gain one round of warning; failure means they get none (but are not surprised—roll initiative as usual). There are as many wolves as there are PCs, plus one more. The extra one is good for taking out a few Ulricans (who do not, however, hesitate to fight their sacred animal)—or a horse if you're feeling particularly nasty. Double these numbers if the characters are veterans. Statistics for wolves can be found in *WFRP* (page 233).

Sticks are a good idea: they count as Improvised Weapons and may be picked up as a half action. Fire is a better idea, but if it was not lit after the Firebirds visit, it takes one round to light the kindling and then one round for each brand to catch. Any wolf damaged by fire must make a **Will Power Test** or flee. The wolves also flee if half their number are killed or critically wounded. A successful **Outdoor Survival** or **Animal Care Test** reveals this is far more zeal than wolves would naturally show, so they must have been starving or driven by some other force (and they did not appear emaciated).

When the wolves are driven off, there is time for quick burials and/or **Heal Tests**, but everyone is keen to move out quickly, away from this haunted place. Anyone searching again finds all the missing weapons in the bottom of a creek bed after about 10 minutes. Ungol types are heard to mutter about spirits and their games.

GOING WITH THE FLOE

After another day's travel and night's rest (dealing possibly with lacking a yurta) the group reaches a frozen river early the next morning. The river is fifteen yards across, and crossing the ice is the only option, as the wooden bridge that links the paths has been destroyed. Investigating the bridge shows it was burned down and quite recently. Anyone who ponders the question ought to realise that these circumstances create a good place for an ambush; a successful **Academic Knowledge (Strategy/Tactics) Test** reveals the same.

Although winter is approaching, a successful **Outdoor Survival Test** confirms the ice is clearly new and not too thick. The weakest point is about halfway across, and the ice shatters there if it takes on too much of the weight at once. You can let the ice crack at a dramatic time, after a set amount of weight, or roll randomly. Count each person crossing as one, each horse, pony, or wagon as two. The ice cracks when the count equals seven (while that person or animal is crossing). Alternatively, roll a d10 for each crosser after the first, with the ice breaking if you roll less than the count of all previous crossings. For example, if someone rides across the ice, this total is a count of three. When the next person or animal crosses, a roll of a one or a two sees the ice crack.

When it cracks, those within two yards must make a successful **Agility Test** to leap to safety. The next round, the rest of the river breaks up, and they (and anyone else who has not fled to the banks) must make the test again to reach terra firma.

Anyone who falls in must make a successful **Routine (+10) Swim Test** to stay afloat despite the shocking cold water and swim to a point where they can pull themselves up or reach help. Otherwise, they bob helplessly in the current until they succeed on this roll. Once they reach a stable ice-floe or a bank, they can pull themselves to safety with a successful **Strength Test**. Alternatively, anyone on the bank with a Strength Bonus (or combined Strength, if two help) of 4 or higher can pull the person to safety without trouble. Stronger types may want to

TIME TO GO

After being attacked by Leshii, Ungol characters may wonder if their mission is cursed, and they may believe it after the Vodiano appears. Even if they aren't superstitious, the dangers apparent in the oblast may make mercenary types wonder if they're being paid enough to risk their lives. GMs should remind characters who are considering leaving that a larger group has a better chance of surviving than a smaller one, and they may be abandoning their fellow travellers to certain death. Father Ludwig is defiant about going on and does his best to convince the PCs to stay with him, offering more money or appealing to their sense of justice, as appropriate. Regardless, once they cross the river, dramatic contrivance can bring the blizzard at any point, which should limit everyone's choices and move things directly on to the climax.

EFFECTS OF ARMOUR

Anyone wearing Medium Armour, or any piece of chainmail besides a coif, suffers a -5 penalty to all Strength rolls in the river.

Anyone wearing Heavy Armour or any piece of plate mail besides a helm, suffers a -10 to all Strength rolls in the river.

Anyone who gets wet in metal armour loses Toughness at a rate of 2 per minute rather than 1, once he gets out.

jump in to help others: swimming whilst bearing up another makes the **Swim Test Challenging (-10)**. You may also use the expanded **Swimming** rules in *WC* (page 27).

Horses must make these same rolls but must make an **Agility Test** to leave the water and cannot be lifted out. Horses failing this roll must then also make a successful **Will Power Test** or panic. Panicked horses flail and drown unless calmed down with a successful **Animal Care Test**. The same skill can help guide the horse out, making its **Agility Test Easy (+20)**.

After one round of people in the water, the Vodianoï moves to grab someone and drag them down. Anyone grabbed by the Vodianoï is automatically grappled; they have no chance to avoid the water spirit's slimy grip. Use the standard grappling rules, assuming the Vodianoï has an effective Strength of 40. Vodianoï uses his action to drag the person (requiring an **Opposed Strength Test**). Once the victim is under water, Vodianoï Strength counts as 60. Consult **Suffocation** in *WFRP* (page 136) or the expanded **Swimming** rules in the *WC* (page 27) for what happens next. **Strength Tests** to break free increase in difficulty with each minute, just as the **Toughness Tests** do. A Fate Point provides a sudden slip in the Vodianoï's grip, washing the character up on the bank out of its grasp. If someone breaks free, the Vodianoï tries another target a round later, rather than persisting with a strong victim.

The party can, of course, build a bridge from either side. A bridge to hold a horse takes three hours, minus fifteen minutes

for every level of success achieved on an **Outdoor Survival Test**. A simple log for humanoids to cross takes one third of that time. If the **Outdoor Survival Test** is failed, the bridge counts as 4 points of weight on the ice.

If the party crosses without the ice breaking, the Vodianoï shatters the ice noisily a few moments later and creates the illusion of a young peasant girl being carried along downstream, calling for help. A successful **Academic Knowledge (Spirits) Test** recalls that this is one of the Vodianoï's tricks. Passing a **Hard (-20) Perception Test** reveals that the girl casts no reflection or shadow on the ice floes she passes. Alternatively, anyone making a **Magical Sense Test** can tell the girl is not what she seems. If this test is failed, anyone swimming out to her finds his hands going straight through the illusion, and the Vodianoï will grab him from beneath.

As well as drowning, the group still has to deal with the threat of the cold. Anybody who gets wet begins dying of hypothermia the moment they leave the water. Every round they spend in wet clothing, they will lose 1 from their Toughness. If their Toughness hits 0 in this manner, they fall unconscious into hypothermic shock. To stop this loss, they have to get out of their wet clothes, dry off, and put on some dry ones. To regain their lost Toughness, they must do the previous and then sit in front of a fire: 1 point of Toughness returns every minute spent around it. Dazh has still not forgiven any insult that might have happened to his chosen birds, however, and what's more, the wind has picked up, so even those spared Dazh's curse must make a **Challenging (-10) Outdoor Survival Test** to get one started. Better luck might be had out of the wind, if such a place could be found.

DRIVEN BY SNOW

By now, the group may feel that the forest is trying to kill them, as they are likely freezing, wounded, and possibly horseless. Play upon those fears if you can, describing how menacing the trees seem, how the shadows conceal so many places to hide, how daylight seems to be fading already, and how the winds seem to grow stronger and colder. A successful

TALKING TO THE VODIANOÏ

The Leshii vanishes the moment his trick is done, but the Vodianoï is close under the surface, and those with **Academic Knowledge (Spirits)** may wish to speak to him, to either ask for his assistance or reveal his motivation. Summoning him requires a **Hard (-20) Academic Knowledge (Spirits) Test** to perform the ritual correctly; no special tools or equipment are needed to do so, however—just the proper respectful calls. But the Vodianoï cares only about drowning as many as he can. He can appear as an old man and pretend to be a victim who was tricked into obeying the orders of a crazed hag. The same curse prevents him from uttering her name, but he says he will whisper it to anyone who comes close. As soon as anyone approaches the bank, the Vodianoï tries to pull them in and drown them.

No matter what the characters offer or say, the Vodianoï is a broken record, always demanding they come closer or join it in the water for whatever reason it can think of. Note that the Vodianoï is always exceedingly—even overly—polite and very charming (Fellowship 66), and characters may find it very difficult to resist its call into the water. The only thing that will satisfy his cravings and his promise to the baba is a living Human to drown. If this condition is somehow provided, it bumbles its thanks and departs.

Outdoor Survival Test lets the party know that the wind means a blizzard is on its way, but it should become obvious as the next few hours pass. Travelling in a blizzard is extremely foolish, as it would be impossible to navigate. The party has two choices: they can make camp in the open or head for the rocky outcrop on the nearby hill in the hope of finding shelter there.

It takes them half an hour to get to the outcrop, drastically shortening the time they have to raise camp, but the pay off is that the outcrop may hold caves, and even if it does not, it provides shelter from the wind. Let the characters discuss their options for a while, but in the end, their choice does not matter a great deal for the climax of the adventure.

Inspecting the hill-top reveals a large and well-protected cave area. A successful **Outdoor Survival Test** detects the fresh smell of bear. A **Perception Test** also reveals footprints in the snow, far smaller than any of the party could make. A **Follow Trail Test** reveals they are just a few hours old and they are the tracks of a person with a limited gate walking with the aid of a stick.

Baba Pogodya is in the area, and there is a 50% chance she is in the cave when the characters arrive. Otherwise, she tries to corner any Ungol characters alone if she has a chance. She appears to any Ungol character she can isolate, and before they have time to recover from her grotesque appearance (remember the torn out eye and severed hand), she offers a short and dark warning, *“Leave this place, child of the Ungol! Blood must be spilt tonight, and I cannot speak for the lives of those who remain with these świnia! Leave now, and you may be spared!”*

She uses this moment (or any other chance she has) to steal something personal of the characters, so she may cast *curses*. A moment later, she is gone, disappearing into the forest. She can be tracked, though the blizzard already makes such tests Hard (–20). If the characters somehow manage to attack or trap her, she calls down the cave bear immediately. Otherwise, it is up to you when the bear attacks. If the characters explore the cave, the baba may try to trap them in there or use the opportunity to attack the Ulricans below, as you see fit. Those near or in the cave hear the bear roaring; those camped down by the river have no warning until the screaming starts. Due to the oncoming blizzard, the bear gains the Concealment Skill and may surprise his prey. See **Cave Bear** on page 134. For veteran characters, use an **Ice Troll** instead (page 139)—the baba has carefully led him to the area with a trail of food.



If anyone has time to look around during the bear's attack, they spy the baba perched nearby, egging on her ursine companion and attempting to add to the characters' miseries and deaths with her curses. With a Magic Characteristic of only 2, she cannot rely on *greater curse*, and if things look grim, she may try to summon some Ghosts to assist her. The bear is loyal and moves to protect her if it can, but if she is killed or disabled, the bear loses its drive to kill and wanders off if not given immediate instructions.

It is also possible—if the bear is killed or led away, and the characters get close enough—that they may try to reason with the baba. Baba Pogodya is not insane, and an impassioned plea from a wise and dutiful Ungol will not fall on entirely deaf ears. However, she is violently enraged and half-mad from the pain of her recent self-mutilation, and she would need to be calmed down immensely before such discussions could begin. Restraining her or causing her to sleep would be enough, but note that this is only enough to *begin* such discussions. Characters must be extremely persuasive, making **Very Hard** (–30) **Charm Tests** to convince her that their very presence is not a personal insult or a physical threat. Persuading her is

THE HAG'S CURSES

Baba Pogodya has quite a few opportunities to gather personal items from the group, either on her own (at the river or when the blizzard begins) or through her agents. If she has procured anything belonging to the characters, she casts the curse *misfortune* upon those whose items she has found. You can use this to scale up the encounters as needed: if the party is having an easy time with the bear, a torrent of curses can quickly raise the stakes, but if they have been unlucky previously, the hag may simply wait, watch, and cackle.



much easier, of course, if Father Ludwig is dead or no longer around—if those two are put together, they will incite each other to rage within moments. Note that Intimidation does not work on Baba Pogodya at all: she has faced down Daemons without blinking and has no fear of death or pain whatsoever.

Whatever happens, the blizzard blows out in a few hours, and the sun rises on a clear day.

HARD CHOICES

Whether Empire or Kislevite, there are three basic ways to end this scenario. The first is to kill the bear (or the Troll)—a difficult task but not impossible if the entire party works together. The second is to find Baba Pogodya and either kill her or find some way to bargain for their lives. The third option is to retreat. The bear does not cross the river unless a makeshift bridge remains (it takes two rounds for the characters to destroy such a creation), and the baba will be satisfied with the southerners turning tail. Trying to wait out the bear or go around a different way is difficult; the bear and the baba are gone by the next morning. But they are not far away, and they try the attack again the next night. Eventually, supplies will become an issue.

The conclusion of this adventure is left deliberately open, and there is no “right” solution. If the characters are Ultricans, their choices are fairly limited: any Ungol guides flee, and any Gospodars only remain if the Ultricans have treated them very well. Father Ludwig is not so determined to reach Vitkal that he will face a raging cave bear and flees if the characters do. It

is up to their loyalty to him and the cult as to how much they protect him and if they can convince him to leave.

Things are much more interesting if the PCs are all Kislevites. Ungol characters should be aware of the spirits moving against them and may have even been ordered away by the hag witch, something hard to ignore. Loyal Gospodars, however, should be less inclined to leave, as this means failing to uphold the Tzarina’s laws. There is also the moral dilemma: Father Ludwig may be convinced to flee, but it takes some doing, particularly if all he is presented with are mysterious warnings and Ungol superstition. If the Kislevites leave the Ultricans to their fate, the bear does not follow them, and Baba Pogodya spares them as long as they offer no assistance to the Ultricans, who are all brutally killed and eaten. Feel free to hand out Insanity Points as the Ultricans’ agonised screams carry through the blizzard, and their severed limbs dot the snow in the morning.

Regardless of the casualties, the party still has to survive the blizzard, but once the baba’s dirty work is done, it blows over within an hour. Travel can continue for a few hours before nightfall (when the bear and the baba may return, as discussed). If all the Ultricans are dead, Baba Pogodya allows any remaining Kislevites to reach Vitkal without further impediment. Likewise, if the group defeats the baba or convinces her to be merciful, they reach Vitkal safely late on the next day.

If Father Ludwig reaches Vitkal—or the characters arrive with the intent of continuing the investigation—he will be met by Ataman Karolek, who announces his prepared cover story: Baba Pogodya burned Brother Jorgen, and her debt has already been paid with her death. Father Ludwig is satisfied with this, gathers his brother’s remains, and heads home. If the baba is not dead, she is in the stanitsa waiting for them and tells the same story. However, there is little point in arresting her or trying her—the injuries she inflicted to summon the spirits kill her in a few days’ time. Even Father Ludwig can be convinced to stay his desire for vengeance so long as it is written down in his records that the baba was found guilty through confession.

If the characters arrive without Father Ludwig or seeking only shelter and food, they will be welcomed, though not without suspicion. Karolek tells them their side of the story and mentions the messenger if nobody thinks to ask about it. The identity of the messenger and his master are unknown to the stanitsa, but it should become obvious to the characters that Father Ludwig’s rage was not the only factor behind this tragedy, and that a traitor to the Tzarina has spies in the palace or the embassy. What they do with this information and how the traitor will react to his plans being spoiled may be the subject of future adventures.

EXPERIENCE

The characters receive 75 xp for completing this adventure, plus an additional 50 xp if they defeated the bear or the baba or convinced her to be merciful.

— COLLECTED STATISTICS —

The following NPCs appear in this scenario.

FATHER LUDWIG RACHEZÜCKER

Male Human Priest of Ulric, ex-Initiate, ex-Zealot

Father Ludwig is a pillar of his cult—almost literally. He is as straight in his behaviour as he is of spine and is as clean and neat as his perfectly shaved head. Dependable, passionate, and persuasive, he is both a powerful preacher and a tireless worker behind the scenes. He fervently believes in expanding the Cult of Ulric throughout Kislev to the greater benefit of all. He has a habit, however, of taking on every job personally and becoming individually involved in its success or failure. The loss of his brother has pushed this behaviour to the extreme, and he now believes any failure to deal out justice and receive restitution for the cult will be a sign of his abject failure, to his God and to his family.

Father Ludwig was raised in the Empire but has spent the last five years spreading the word in Kislev (or whichever city you choose). He speaks good Kislevarin and knows a fair bit of Gospodar customs. He is a generous employer, and his underlings respect him for it.

Insanity Points: 3

— Father Ludwig Rachezücker Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
44	28	39 (3)	50 (5)	45	38	46	51

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History, Strategy/Tactics) (Int), Academic Knowledge (Theology) (Int +20), Channelling (WP), Charm (Fel +10), Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int +10), Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int), Gossip (Fel +10), Heal (Int +10), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int +10), Read/Write (Int +10), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Classical, Kislevarin, Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S)

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Divine Lore (Ulric), Luck, Petty Magic (Divine), Public Speaking, Resistance to Magic, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Suave, Very Strong

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 16

Armour (Light): Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 1)

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Axe) (1d10+4)

Trappings

Ludwig wears heavy winter gear, making him all but blend in with the natives if it weren't for his Empire speech and the wolf pelt he wears slung over a shoulder. In his heavy pack, he keeps food, water, and general supplies, as well as a legal ledger, a writing kit, and a small Ulrican prayer book.

BABA POGODYA

Female Ungol Hag Mother, ex-Hag Witch, ex-Wise Woman

Baba Pogodya's mother died in childbirth, and her father was eaten by a Troll. She was raised instead by the people of Vitkal, their wise woman, and the winds of the north. As she grew older and took on the role of wise woman, Pogodya came to regard her stanitsa and its people as her family, her children—hers and only hers. Like the mother bear, she is ready to defend them (and the old ways they practice) against everything and anything, particularly the outside world and the ways of the decadent southerners. She encouraged her people in their anger against the Ulrican friar, and when she heard that more upstarts were coming, she told no one her plan. She alone will protect her family, and she set out into the oblast to make sure the Ulricans would never reach their destination.

Baba Pogodya isn't mad, but she is obsessed with her goal and has no compunction whatsoever in killing to achieve it. Old and withered even more than other hags—and now missing her eye and hand—she casts a terrifying and commanding presence. Those who come up against her fury and her uncompromising will are deeply shaken by the experience.

Insanity Points: 1

— Baba Pogodya Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35	29	38 (3)	51 (5)	37	56	63	36

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Spirits) (Int +10), Command (Fel +10), Common Knowledge (Kislev), Common Knowledge (Troll Country) (Int +10), Heal (Int), Intimidate (S+10), Magical Sense (WP +10), Perception (Int +10), Performer (Storyteller) (Fel), Prepare Poison (Int +10), Ride (Ag), Speak Arcane Language (Magick) (Int), Speak Language (Ungol) (Int), Trade (Herbalist) (Int)

Talents: Coolheaded, Excellent Vision, Fast Hands, Hardy, Lesser Magic (*Aethyric Armour*, *Dispel*, *Vazila*), Meditation, Petty Magic (Hag), Rover, Very Resilient, Witch Lore (Koldunja)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 15

Magic: 2; Petty Magic Hag, *Aethyric Armour*, *Dispel*, *Vazila*, Witch Lore (Koldunja)

Weapons: Dagger (1d10)

Trappings

There's no question that Baba Pogodya is a hag. She wears a long shawl that looks more like a blanket. Woven of dyed red and green yarn, the covering is knotted with bits of bone, feathers, and fur. To help her get around, she relies heavily on

a gnarled cane of black wood. She carries a sling bag that holds the tools of her trade—four healing draughts, four healing poultices, koumiss, mortar and pestle and other oddities such as paws from rabbits, mummified mice, and other good luck charms.

DRAKE, HICHS, UDZEN, AND VASKERS

Male Human Ulrican Bodyguards

These four are devout Ulricans and serve their God with courage. Like most Ulricans, they are grim, dour, and extremely hairy. They are all Empire-born and know very little about Kislev and its customs, but they are not stupid and defer to their Kislevite companions when out of their league. However, due to their poor grasp of the language, figuring out the best procedure can take some time.

Hichs wears an eye patch and does most of the talking; he is the default leader of the group. Udzen enjoys a good carouse and is always the first to start sharing the flask or singing dirty songs. He is also superstitious and is easily spooked by bad omens. Drake and Vaskers are two hugely muscled best friends who are always trying to out do each other and betting on the outcome.

— Drake, Hichs, Udzen, and Vaskers Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35	30	38 (3)	40 (4)	35	26	35	28

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gossip (Fel), Heal (Int), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Speak Language (Reikspiel) (Int)

Talents: Disarm, Lightning Reflexes, Mimic, Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying, Throwing), Streetfighting, Strike to Stun, Very Strong

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 11

Armour (Medium): Mail Shirt and Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 3)

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Sword or Warhammer) (1d10+3), 2 Throwing Axes (1d10; range 6/12; reload half), Short Bow with 10 Arrows (1d10+3; range 16/32; reload half)

Trappings

The Ulrican bodyguards all wear winter clothing beneath heavy wolf-skin cloaks. They carry backpacks containing a healing draught, a flask of poor spirits, a bit of food, and some water. Each man carries 1d10 s and 1d10+1d5 p.

PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

The following characters are provided for you to use as NPCs, replacement characters, or for use in other adventures.

MITRI LEHEDYENKO

Male Human (Gospodar) Streltsi

You were a foundling, raised by and in the great city of Kislev. An orphan has few prospects, so you joined the army as soon as they would take you, becoming one of the city's streltsi. There, you were taught to believe in the courage of Tor, the virtue of a good, straight shot, and the infallibility of the Tzarina. You know little of the world outside the capital, but it is a great honour to defend the city of the Ice Queen. You dream of one day serving the Tzarina more directly in the ranks of the chekist, as some of your brothers in arms have. Perhaps this mission is a chance to impress and make those dreams come true.

— Mitri Lehedyenko Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
46	39	38 (3)	31 (3)	34	28	31	32
+10√	+10	+5	+5	+5√	—	+5	—

Skills: Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int), Consume Alcohol (T +10), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gamble (Int), Perception (Int), Speak Language (Kislevarin) (Int +10)

Talents: Marksman, Mighty Shot, Quick Draw, Savvy, Specialist Weapon Group (Gunpowder, Two-handed), Warrior Born

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 10

Armour (Light): Helmet, Leather Jerkin, and Leggings (Head 1, Body 1, Legs 1)

Weapons: Berdysh (called Lushka) (1d10+3; Fast, Impact, Tiring), Firearm with ammunition for 10 shots (called Mishka) (1d10+5; range 24/48; reload 2 full; impact, unreliable)

Trappings

You wear a streltsi uniform, a complicated set of apparel that consists of multiple layers of red and green fabric tied into place. Around your neck, you wear an icon of the Tzarina. Your purse is nearly empty, holding only 4 ducats.

GUMPWIT BEARBRITCHES

Male Halfling Mercenary

Your parents served under Tzar Boris, though admittedly, in the catering corps. They raised you with stories of the courage and greatness of the Red Tzar, and so inspiring were their stories that you became determined to serve the Tzar yourself, in a more military fashion if possible. As yet, no rota will take Halflings; instead, you offer your service and your deadly accuracy with a crossbow to the highest bidder. Still, you try to do proud by the memory of Tzar Boris and his legacy, and you hope that one day you'll earn the place amongst a great pulk that you deserve.

— Gumpwit Bearbritches Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
17	49	26 (2)	21 (2)	45	30	35	38
+10	+10√	+5	+5	+5√	—	+5	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry) (Int), Common Knowledge (Halflings, Kislev) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Gamble (Int), Gossip (Fel), Haggle (Fel), Perception (Int), Ride (Ag), Secret Language (Battle Tongue) (Int), Speak Language (Halfling, Kislevarin, Reikspiel) (Int), Swim (S), Trade (Cook) (Int)

Talents: Ambidextrous, Night Vision, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Resistance to Chaos, Sharpshooter, Specialist Weapon Group (Sling)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 9

Armour (Medium): Mail Shirt and Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 3)

Weapons: Crossbow with 10 Bolts (1d10+4; range 24/48; reload half; Sharpshooter), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+2), Shield (1d10; Defensive, Special), Sling with 5 Stones (1d10+3; range 16/32; reload free; Sharpshooter)

Trappings

In a great pack on your back, you carry a heavy, iron cook pot, a jumble of parsnips, carrots, potatoes, and a variety of other vegetables. You have a healing draught that you keep on a leather thong around your neck, so you don't forget it. Finally, in your left boot is 11 ducats, which give you a jingling sound and a hobbling gait when you walk.

JARAN

Male Human (Ungol) Pit Fighter

Even as a boy, you loved to fight. Soon enough, you were drawn to the thrill of pit fighting, making fast money from your skills and spending it on women and *samogon* (Kislevite moonshine) just as quickly. After exhausting the pit circles near your stanitsa, you heard there was a lot more money to be had down south, but so far, you have found neither fame nor fortune. You have been wondering if you might have to soon head home in embarrassment. A well-paying bodyguard job on the side would help you stay in the city for at least a few more months.

— Jaran Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
41	31	31 (S)	35 (3)	34	29	38	31
+10√	+10	—	+5	+5	—	+10	—

Skills: Common Knowledge (Kislev) (Int), Dodge Blow (Ag), Intimidate (S), Ride (Ag), Speak Language (Kislevarin, Ungol) (Int)

Talents: Resistance to Poison, Specialist Weapon Group (Flail, Parrying, Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Very Resilient, Very Strong, Wrestling

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14

Armour (Medium): Mail Shirt and Leather Jack (Arms 1, Body 3)

Weapons: Buckler (1d10; CV+1; Defensive, Pummelling), Hand Weapon (Sword) (1d10+4; CV+1), Great Weapon (Axe) (1d10+4; CV+1; impact, slow), Knuckle Dusters (1d10+1; CV+1; Pummelling)

Trappings

You don't have much beyond a simple set of clothes that have seen better days. A large skin of koumiss helps you forget about the cold and failing that, the 9 ducats clanking in your purse will help you find other ways to stay warm.

BABA TULI

Female Human (Ungol) Wise Woman

Everyone always said that with your bright red hair you were marked to be a wise woman. You just didn't expect it to be so soon. But when the kyazak came and burnt the barricades and killed the warriors and Baba Olna, you were the next in line. After the attack, your stanitsa needs strong men to rebuild it, so you have come south seeking your brother with only your loyal dog for company. You heard recently your brother had been seen working as a scout near Vitkal. You hope to find him and learn some more about your craft as you go.

— Bab Tuli Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
39	29	28 (2)	30 (3)	30	41	38	35
—	—	—	+5	—	+15√	+10	+5√

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Spirits) (Int), Command (Fel), Common Knowledge (Kislev, Troll Country) (Int), Consume Alcohol (T), Heal (Int), Intimidate (S), Magical Sense (WP), Perception (Int), Performer (Storyteller) (Fel), Ride (Ag), Speak Language (Kislevarin, Ungol) (Int), Trade (Herbalist) (Int)

Talents: Savvy, Very Resilient

Traits: Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Fate Points:** 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 12

Weapons: Quarterstaff (1d10; Defensive, Pummelling)

Trappings

Unlike your comrades, you came prepared for a long journey. In a large pack on your back, you carry an anti-toxin kit, healing draught, healing poultice, and a skin of koumiss. You wear a long, insulated dress and a blue shawl around your head. You don't have much money, only 2 ducats. You do, however, have the loyal company of Dazhy, your herd dog and friend.

APPENDIX: BEASTS OF THE OBLAST

The following entries expand the creatures found in the Old World, presenting a diverse assortment of animals, monsters, and supernatural creatures that claim Kislev as their home.

BEARS

"The bear and I are one. The bear and Kislev are one. To stand against me is to fight against the land itself, and all her peoples, and against Father Bear himself."

—TZAR BORIS URSUN, AT THE BATTLE OF BLACK RIVER

"The massive creature sniffed me, put a paw on my shoulder and punched my chest in a friendly fashion. I looked into its eyes, barely a few inches from mine own, and saw the eyes of a man, not a beast. Perhaps it is true the bravest sons of Ursun return to life as bears. Or perhaps we men are closer to mere beasts than we believe."

—FRIAR BEGEL, "MY TRAVELS IN KISLEV"

There is no creature more important to the Kislevites than the bear. He is more than just the symbol of the land, a God, and a king; his image is more than just a rallying figure for armies and proud citizens. The bear shares his life with the people of the oblast and shares their struggles. When winters are harsh, he goes hungry just as they do. When spring comes again, he takes his young to the river to play just as they do. In summer's bloom, he trains his young to hunt, and he hunts as well as any man. The only difference is that the bear hunts men, and men hunt the bear. Despite this, the bear is not an enemy so much as a healthy competitor. It is right to be wary of the bear and fight to drive him back to his own lands should he come out of the forest or caves—but so, too, will the bear fight to protect his home, and so, too, is he wary of the rifle, the blade, and the bow.

The Kislevites recognise three separate types of bear.

COMMON BEAR

The common or southern bear is the same species that roams the northern lands of the Empire. These large, brown beasts are the least dangerous, despite reaching seven feet when on their hind legs.

NEW TALENT: BEAR HUG

You can pin large opponents with your massive bulk and powerful strength. You gain a +10 bonus on Grapple Tests and a total of +20 bonus on tests made to maintain the grapple and to damage the grappled opponent. Finally, your Strength Bonus counts as one higher when dealing damage on a grapple.

— Common Bear Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33	0	52 (5)	47 (4)	25	10	25	0

Skills: Perception (Int), Swim (S)

Talents: Bear Hug, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure

Traits: Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws), Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 20

Weapons: Claws (1d10+6; CV+1)

Slaughter Margin: Challenging

CAVE BEAR

Larger, stronger, and with grey-speckled fur are the cave or mountain bears. Unlike their forest-dwelling cousins, cave bears are strictly carnivorous and are far more territorial and given to violence. Many an adage turns on the bad temper or destructive fury of a cave bear.

— Cave Bear Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36	0	56 (5)	49 (4)	28	10	30	0

Skills: Follow Trail (Int), Intimidate (S), Perception (Int), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Swim (S)

Talents: Bear Hug, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure

Traits: Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws), Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 24

Weapons: Claws (1d10+6; CV+1)

Slaughter Margin: Challenging

ICE BEAR

Finally, in the far north live the enormous ice bears. These creatures use their white fur to hunt invisibly on the tundra. They are frequently man-eaters and can smell such prey from miles away. To hunt and slay an ice bear is a deed worthy of many songs; to tame one, as Boris Ursus did, is a deed of legend.

— Ice Bear Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
39	0	59 (5)	53 (5)	30	12	35	0

Skills: Concealment (Ag +20), Follow Trail (Int), Intimidate (S +10), Perception (Int+10), Scale Sheer Surface (S), Swim (S)
Talents: Bear Hug, Frenzy, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure
Traits: Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws), Unsettling

Combat

Attacks: 2; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 28
Weapons: Claws (1d10+6; CV+1)
Slaughter Margin: Hard

EYELESS ONES

"The dead are as close to us as ice to snow."

—OBLAST SAYING

"Help a blind old baba, dearie, there's a good lad. Here, let me take your hand..."

—TYPICAL WHISPER OF AN EYELESS ONE

There is a tradition out in the oblast to take the dead away into the snow and leave them there, for the ground is far too frozen to be broken by shovels for a grave, and wood is too precious to waste on pyres. According to the old ways, however, the dead sometimes wake and try to find their way back to the stanitsa. To prevent this, the eyes are removed from the body so they cannot see which way to go. However, there are some restless, hungry spirits who will not let this deter them, and they return to life in their old form—though their skin is bleached white, and their eye sockets remain empty. These Undead creatures have nothing of their old personality and hunger only for the warm touch of the living. They hide their deficiency under a deep hood and prey on travellers, sucking out their souls and stealing their eyes. Everyone knows when a traveller stumbles in with empty, bleeding eye sockets, the fool has met an Eyeless One and paid dearly for his kindness.

— Eyeless One Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36	28	38 (3)	44 (4)	36	32	44	38

Skills: Charm (Fel), Intimidate (S)

Talents: Strike to Stun

Traits: Fearless, Freezing Touch, Frightening, Natural Weapons (Claws), Night Vision, Pass for Human, Undead

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 14
Weapons: Claws (1d10+3)
Slaughter Margin: Challenging

Freezing Touch

Whenever an Eyeless One succeeds on a Weapon Skill Test to attack a living creature, it reduces the victim's Toughness Bonus by 1. If the Toughness Bonus falls to 0, the victim falls unconscious for 1d10 hours. Such victims may be awakened



earlier with a successful Heal Test. Whether unconscious or not, the victim regains 1 point of his Toughness Bonus each day.

Pass for Human

As long as the Eyeless One keeps its empty sockets hidden, it may pass for Human. In this state it loses the Frightening Trait.

FIREBIRDS

"I don't care who it's sacred to! The damn tent's on fire!"

—KASSEL, EMPIRE MERCENARY

"Something like a pheasant, only prettier. A lovely bird. Beautiful plumage."

—FRIAR BEGEL, "MY TRAVELS IN KISLEV"

Firebirds share their name with the awesome flame-tailed creatures that are messengers of Dazh and are considered to be descended from their mythical cousins. As a result, these gleaming-feathered pheasant-like birds are believed sacred to Dazh, and it is extremely bad luck to harm or kill one, particularly when a priest of Dazh is nearby. This superstition has helped these birds survive despite their rather annoying habits. The male firebirds build a bower to attract the females, and to keep it free from snow, they build it from hot coals and embers they collect from campfires. Anyone camping in the wild in early spring who leaves their fire pit unattended whilst sleeping will almost certainly wake to find a clutch of firebirds scratching and pecking through the embers, an activity that often leaves nearby equipment the worse for wear.

— Firebird Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
14	26	8 (0)	11 (1)	26	6	10	12

Talents: Specialist Weapon Group (Thrown)

Traits: Coal-Thrower, Fireproof, Flier

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 2/fly 6; **Wounds:** 5

Weapons: Beak (1d10–4), Hot Coals (1d10+2)

Slaughter Margin: Very Easy

Coal-Thrower

When encountered, a firebird has a 50% chance of having a red-hot coal in its mouth or talons. It flings this material at any threatening creature by making a Ballistic Skill Test. A direct hit deals 1d10+2 fire damage. Misses may fall wherever the GM wishes—though somewhere flammable is quite fun.

Fireproof

The firebird's shiny golden feathers are almost incombustible and are extremely resistant to heat. A firebird reduces any non-magical fire damage it takes by 9. Magical fire damages them normally.

FROSTFIEND

"When the frost spirit saw he had lost the love of the princess, he rose up in great fury to destroy her. But Dazh was swifter and cut the spirit down with his blade and threw his body onto the earth. But the frost spirit was not dead. Lost in a terrible rage, he sought to destroy all the children of Dazh. We have lost many sons to his claws, and we will lose more."

—BABA OLNA

In the cities, the Frostfiend is thought to be mythical, appearing as it so often does in tales as the chief enemy of Dazh. But they are very real. Luckily, they make their home in the snows of the far north—and some scholars believe they are a part of those snows, as the Treemen of Athel Loren are with their forest. Due to their white fur, these bat-winged monstrosities are invisible amongst the blizzards in which they fly. Thankfully, they tend to shriek with bloodlust when their heat-sensitive eyes detect their next meal. This warning has saved many from being eviscerated by their razor-sharp claws, but many others remain rooted to the spot, for to face a Frostfiend is to face the terrifying fury of the blizzard itself. Few who survive such an attack ever go north again.

— Frostfiend Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
59	0	54 (5)	48 (4)	66	34	85	16

Skills: Concealment (Ag +20), Dodge Blow (Ag), Perception (Int +20)

Talents: Lightning Parry, Strike Mighty Blow

Traits: Fearless, Frightening, Hoverer, Ice-Blooded, Natural Weapons (Claws), Night Vision, Rending Attacks, Winter's Fury

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** 6 or hover 9; **Wounds:** 34

Weapons: Claws (1d10+6; armour piercing; impact)

Slaughter Margin: Hard

Ice-Blooded

Frostfiends are so at home with the frozen north that they are immune to any effects from cold, including magically created cold effects.

Rending Attacks

The natural weapons of a Frostfiend are so razor sharp they count as having the Armour Piercing and Impact Qualities.

Winter's Fury

The Frostfiend flies on a whirlwind of stinging ice. Anyone within 12 yards of the fiend takes a –10 penalty to Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, and Agility Tests due to the blinding ice and furious wind that accompany it.

GLIMMERS

"There are spirits of the barn, the home, the tree, the stream. But some spirits have no names, no faces. So they take them from those who wander from the path."

—BABA OLNA

Kislev is a haunted land, full of ghosts and spirits who long for nothing more than to walk amongst the living once again. Glimmers steal the images of those they encounter, living or dead, and then enter their lives. They prefer the dead because they thrive on strong emotion, and it removes the possibility of being exposed by the original. Those who have their image stolen suffer no adverse effects, and Glimmers are not inherently malicious. They simply wish to inhabit their host's image as long as possible, and some will do anything to ensure that. Glimmers can be detected by shining fire in their eyes, which reflect the light as if from a mirror. Likewise, the sun gives away their nature as shimmering reflections, and they vanish at dawn to avoid this. Of course, in the north, the dawn may not come for weeks, and many a ghost story tells of the damage a long-staying Glimmer has done.

— Glimmers Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33	28	42 (4)	30 (3)	32	31	40	38

Skills: Charm (Fel), Common Knowledge (any one) (Int),

Concealment (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Gossip (Fel),

Perception (Int), Speak Language (any one) (Int)

Traits: Ethereal, Night Vision, Steal Image

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 4; **Wounds:** 16
Weapons: Hand Weapon (varies) (1d10+4)
Slaughter Margin: Average

Ethereal

An ethereal creature is insubstantial and weightless. It can pass through solid objects, including walls and doors. Note this does not give any ability to see through solid objects, only pass through them. An ethereal creature partially hidden inside an object gains a +30 bonus on Concealment Tests. An ethereal creature that wishes to be is completely silent, with no need to make Silent Move Tests. An ethereal creature is also immune to normal weapons, which simply pass through its body as if it wasn't there. Daemons, spells, other ethereal creatures, and opponents armed with magic weapons may all injure an ethereal creature normally. An ethereal creature can't usually affect the mortal world and thus can't damage non-ethereal opponents unless it has a suitable special ability or talent. Creatures with the Ethereal Trait can damage other creatures with the Ethereal Trait normally.

Steal Image

If a Human comes within 12 yards of a Glimmer, it may steal the Human's image. Those who possess Magical Sense may make a Hard (–20) Will Power Test to resist this act. Success means the Glimmer cannot try again on that person. When the Glimmer has stolen an image, it assumes the appearance of the target and immediately loses the Ethereal Trait. It can become Ethereal again at will, but doing so causes it to lose its image, and it must steal one from another person. Glimmers must become Ethereal again at sunrise (reverting to a grey, shifting mist) and can steal no more images until sunset. They may steal as many images as they wish during the night, however, and do not have to lose their current image to steal another. Shining a light of torch-size or greater within a foot of a Glimmer reveals its ghostly nature.

INDRIKA

"When Indrika roar, the sky falls. When Indrika stamp their foot, the earth trembles. When Indrika die, the land will die."

—BABA OLNA

"Part horse, part deer, part yak, part dragon-ogre too, for all I know. All I can say for certain is cover your ears when they bellow. It is louder than cannon fire, and when it came over those frozen mountains, I really did think the sky was falling."

—FRIAR BEGEL, "MY TRAVELS IN KISLEV"

Indrika are creatures found in the snow-covered mountains of the north-east. They resemble large, wide horses covered in thick, shaggy hair with very large feet. Their wide-spread hooves let them walk on the thick snow and balance on rough mountains, but they also have another, stranger function.

Indrika can rear up and bring both front legs down hard, creating powerful vibrations. At the same time, it opens up its massive chest and throat and expels a deep baritone call. The combined effect of the vibrations, the call, and the echoing effect of the valleys below means this bellow can be heard more than twenty miles away. Indrika use this to communicate and also to cause avalanches. They are intelligent enough to realise small avalanches at regular intervals prevent larger ones that would destroy the trees from which they get the mosses and lichen they feed upon. Thus they are seen by the Ungol tribes as caretakers of the mountains and their fellow creatures. When frightened or angered, however, they can also use their voices to cause terrible destruction.

— Indrika Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
24	0	45 (4)	48 (4)	22	14	20	18

Skills: Follow Trail (Int), Perception (Int), Perform (Sing) (Fel +10)

Traits: Cause Avalanche, Deafening Bellow, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Hooves), Stomp

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 18
Armour: Thick Fur (Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)
Weapons: Hooves (1d10+4)
Slaughter Margin: Average

Cause Avalanche

If able to reach a suitable position and stomp and bellow for one full minute, an Indrik may cause an avalanche to occur on any mountain slope within a one-mile radius. If aimed at a certain spot, the avalanche reaches that area in 1d10 rounds. Those caught in the 50-yard mouth of an avalanche take 1d10+8 damage that ignores armour, and they end up 1d10+10 yards in a random direction from their original position, buried under 1d10+1 feet of snow. If they are conscious, they may dig out at a rate of one foot every five minutes (less with appropriate tools) but must first succeed on an Intelligence Test to dig in the right direction. Suffocation, exposure, and hypothermia serve as potential and likely complications.

Deafening Bellow

As a full round action, an Indrik may rear back and bellow at its opponents. Anyone within 20 yards must make a Toughness Test or be deafened for 1d10 hours. Deafened characters must also make a Will Power Test or be stunned for 1 round. Filling the ears with wax or cotton protects against this but only if the material also renders the wearer deaf.

Stomp

As a full action, an Indrik may rear up and stomp with its front hooves. Doing so grants its Natural Weapons the Impact Quality.

NIPPERS

*"Close the door, and lock and latch
Nippers like to cut and scratch!
Stay in your bed through all the night
Nippers like to cut and bite!"*

—CHILDREN'S RHYME

*"I have heard tell of other creatures in the south—the
brain-worm, the swamp-fly—that lay their spawn within
the flesh of men. I warrant these winged blasphemies do
the same, using our very blood to warm their young.
Woe, to be a cradle for a Daemon!"*

—DOKTOR VILYA YEVILNOVICH,
MASTER BESTARIUS,
UNIVERSITY OF KISLEV

In folk-tales, these tiny, mischievous creatures are blamed for nipping the cheeks, chafing the hands, and bringing chilblains to the knees on cold, windy days. Nippers do indeed nip the cheeks and hands, as these inch-high sprites feed on Human blood. Normally, at the first strike of their vicious teeth, their victims brush them away, but a person sleeping or caught in the snow probably won't notice the nip. If not deterred, they lay their crystalline eggs into the blood. As the new Nippers grow, they freeze the blood, turning the afflicted appendage black and dead before the young tear through it to escape. Many a young Kislevite has failed to heed his mother's advice and has lost a hand, ear, or nose because he left them exposed to the cold too long.



— Nipper Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
41	0	19 (1)	15 (1)	54	22	34	24

Skills: Common Knowledge (Elves, Kislev) (Int), Concealment (Ag +20), Dodge Blow (Ag), Follow Trail (Int), Outdoor Survival (Int +20), Perception (Int +10), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Eltharin, Kislevarin) (Int)

Talents: Flee!, Orientation, Rover, Sixth Sense

Traits: Blackening Bite, Hoverer, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 2 or hover 9; **Wounds:** 6

Armour: Ice Shards (Head 1, Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1)

Weapons: Claws and Fangs (1d10+1)

Slaughter Margin: Easy

Blackening Bite

If a Nipper is able to spend a minute or more biting their victim's flesh, it squats over the injury, grunting as it passes its eggs into the wound. Targets may make a Very Easy (+30) Perception Test to notice a Nipper's bite. This test becomes Easy (+20) in cold weather and Routine (+10) in extreme cold. Adjust the modifier by -20 if the target is asleep. The Nippers' spawn burrow out of the flesh in 1d10+2 days; the victim notices the extremity becoming black and numb after half this time. See *WFRP* for the effects of lost limbs. If medical attention is sought before the Nippers burst forth, a successful Hard (-20) Heal Test will remove the larvae before they can do any permanent damage. If this test is failed or not made, the appendage is torn apart. If this is a hand or foot, a successful Toughness Test must be made to keep the appendage modified by the Surgery Talent just as with Critical Hits. Other parts of the body simply become horribly scarred, which may cause a penalty to Fellowship Tests (GM's option).

OBLAST ELK

*"Haunch for here, haunch for there, haunch for winter,
haunch for Bear."*

—OBLAST RHYME ABOUT DIVIDING THE ELK CARCASS

*"The diet of the typical Kislevite peasant is made up of
fish, tubers, and the flesh of the oblast deer. The diet of
the typical Kislevite bear is made up of fish, tubers, and
the oblast deer. It is little wonder these people see so much
kinship with the creatures."*

—FRIAR BEGEL, "MY TRAVELS IN KISLEV"

Along with the bear and the steppe pony, the oblast or ice elk is one of the three creatures vital to stanitsa life. They closely resemble the deer of the Empire but are larger and have much larger horns. Wild ones are hunted for their meat but are extremely elusive, and such hunts can often take weeks to complete. In some stanitsas, they are domesticated to

pull sleighs, ploughs, or mill-wheels, and sometimes they're even used as pack animals. Their milk is fermented to make koumiss. Their hides are used to make cloth and sacking; their bones are carved into pipes, flutes, and tambours, and their intestines are woven to make an extremely strong elastic thread. The uses of the elk are endless, and their application is ubiquitous in any stanitsa. Gospodars are known to hunt the elk for sport alone, a practice the Ungols view as barbaric.

— Oblast Elk Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35	0	36 (3)	40 (4)	30	6	12	0

Skills: Concealment (Ag), Perception (Int +20), Silent Move (Ag +10)

Traits: Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Antlers, Hooves)

Combat

Attacks: 1; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 18

Weapons: Antlers or Hooves (1d10+3)

Slaughter Margin: Easy

TROLLS

"They don't call it Troll Country because it's full of foxes, son."

—OLD YOB, ELK HUNTER

"In the dark midnight hours, I sometimes ponder if we should not be grateful to the Trolls. Perhaps they kill as many of the kyazak as we do. Perhaps without them, all the land would fall under the Chaos raiders. Perhaps not. It grows late, and I have had very much kvas."

—DOKTOR VILYA YEVILOVICH, MASTER BESTARIUS,
UNIVERSITY OF KISLEV

Trolls are huge, strong, and incredibly stupid. They are found throughout the Old World, but the ones in Kislev tend to be the larger and stronger kind. Trolls fashion massive clubs from boulders but will also attack with their claws and their terrible corrosive vomit. The latter softens up their food, which they consume with great passion and fury. Indeed, such is their lust for food that they are known to stop to devour their latest kill in battle even while fighting is still going on around them. Kislev is home to Trolls of many varieties, but only Ice Trolls are described here. For more on Trolls see the *OWB* (players page 27, GMs page 111).

— Troll Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
39	15	52 (5)	49 (4)	22	18	27	10

Skills: Intimidate (S), Perception (Int +10), Scale Sheer Surface (S +10), Speak Language (Dark Tongue, Goblin) (Int)



Talents: Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed)

Traits: Fearless, Frightening, Ice-blooded, Natural Weapons (Claws), Night Vision, Regeneration, Stoopid, Vomit

Combat

Attacks: 3; **Movement:** 6; **Wounds:** 32

Weapons: Claws (1d10+5) or Great Weapon (Club) (1d10+5; impact, slow)

Slaughter Margin: Hard

Regeneration

At the start of its turn each round, an Ice Troll regenerates 1d10 Wounds. Wounds caused by fire cannot be regenerated. This ability ceases to function if the Ice Troll dies.

Stoopid

Ice Trolls are quite dim and often forget what they are doing. Any time an Ice Troll encounters something that might distract it (a fresh carcass, a ripe smell) it must make an Intelligence Test or stop whatever it is doing to engage with this new distraction (eat the carcass, investigate the smell). If the Ice Troll is being attacked, this test becomes Easy (+20).

Vomit

An Ice Troll can take a full action to vomit a corrosive, ill-smelling substance out of its belly. The vomit attack hits a melee opponent, automatically covering them in the foulest of digestive juices and dealing 1d10+5 damage that ignores armour. The vomit may be dodged but not parried.

THE ALREADY DEAD

The heavy crunch of foot steps echoed behind him, bouncing off the silent, narrow buildings that loomed above the Old Town. His heels came down hard on the cobbles; the two inches of snow made footing precarious, and he did not want to slip. If his coat got wet, he might freeze before the night was over. With each heel-hammer on the stone, his mind filled with a litany of hate.

Crunch. Hate. Crunch. Hate. Crunch. Hate. Hate Kislev. Crunch. Hate the damned cold. Crunch. Hate the Daemon-tainted snow that is even now soaking through four pairs of woollen socks with each step. Hate. Hate. Hate.

It has been two—no, three—years now, since he had come to the north, since he had sought his fortune in the Empty Quarter. It seemed like such a grand idea then—a wild, more lawless place, where the warrant with his name on it meant nothing, and there were no watchmen bored enough to ever make another. A land of soldiers, traders, drinkers, and wild men. A land of second chances. A land perfect for a rogue like himself and his partner, Huss, to start anew: no records, no enemies, no history.

Huss was dead now. Ulle had found Huss's body washed up under a jetty with his eyes torn out and all his fingers missing. He'd asked around about gangs and such, but people had just whispered "*chekist*" and looked back at their kvas. Ulle had left the capital then and headed north to Praag, where they said the Tzarina's reach was weak. Not that he was sure they were after him. The chekist apparently needed no crime to enact their punishments.

But Praag was a worse hell than Kislev: the people dirt poor and war-ravaged and the streets cloaked with Chaos-taint as much as snow. But he didn't have the money to leave. No travellers south needed a thin-armed lad, and he'd be damned before he'd go out into the oblast. That, he knew, was certain death—if not from the Trolls, then from the mad fools who lived happily among such danger. In Praag, he was at least safe from death, if not other things. The wart on his back had itched and bled when he scratched it, and then it became a fleshy nub. And then it grew and grew and gained a nail and a knuckle. He didn't have a looking glass to see it, but he didn't need to. It was Huss' ring finger, the one with the scar from the rat bite. There were three there now, and they itched so bad he had to stop sometimes in the street and rub up against a rock wall until he felt something burst and a stickiness run down under all the layers.

Perhaps the single mercy Praag had provided was the constant cold. Cold to the bones. In such weather, nobody noticed a man who always wore a coat, not that it kept the cold out. Ulle couldn't remember the last time he'd felt warm. Today he was wearing three undershirts, a leather jerkin, a woollen jacket, and the coat he'd taken from the streltsi, all stuffed full with straw and rags to no avail. The cold snaked under and around, and the wind blew it through everything, even wood, even stone. He had forgotten warmth, forgotten comfort. He had forgotten everything else as well. Everything except hate.

In Middenheim, they said you had to be crazy to rob a priest. It was foolish to do ill to a man who spoke so often with the Gods, and his prayers for vengeance would surely be answered. But that was in another country, under other Gods. The Gods of Kislev weren't real Gods, he knew. They were shadows and Daemons, cruel and brutal even to their faithful, and mocking of those they smashed against fortune's folly. They worshipped fire because that was the only thing that kept the cold at bay. He knew what that was like—to need fire like it was a woman, like a suck of mandrake—that was enough to make anyone worship it. And the rest were just stories.

There was no fear, then, in the steps that brought him closer and closer to the Lobka house. A priest, he knew, and a mad one by all accounts—mad enough to be noticed in a city like Praag that stank of madmen. Rich enough for his madness to be noticed, perhaps. Rich, definitely, for the man was now throwing away money for nothing but dirt. Ulle had been handed a piece of silver for the bucket of loam he had lugged there last week, and he had seen then the glint of gold and jewels further up the old priest's fingers. Rich, indeed, but not guarded like the druzhinas—not paranoid like the merchants. The old priest was protected by his position as a man of faith and by his reputation as a madman. In the city of Praag, where madness reigned, only a fool would try to rob those whose madness shone out bright.

Maybe I am a fool, pondered Ulle, but I am less a fool than any man in this city—because he was getting out. It had taken him months, but tonight was the night. The priest was the perfect target—large payout, small risk. The time was right—the early frost had driven the few vigilant watchmen indoors for the night, and the streets were empty, despite the midnight sun still shining through the snow-haze. And the method was right—he had studied, he had watched, he had taken his time, mastered his opponents, gathered his tools. Tonight, there would be no mistakes. The hate in him sang of it, promising him victory and flooding him with strength.

As the Lobka house appeared, he began to run, still heavy-footed, still nervous on the slippery snow, but desperate, sloughing forward like a man wading through mud. It was still bright, unearthly so, and tucked into the alley way by the door he would be no less visible than here on the street, but he wasn't running for concealment. He was running for the alley because in it, he was spared a small portion of the wind that whipped along the streets. For a brief second, the slight rise in temperature felt like warmth. Relaxation flooded his body in response, as if stepping out of the wind had opened a tap inside him. Then the cold came back, and with it, his purpose and his hate.

Time to go.

Slowly, gingerly, he pulled off his left glove with his teeth, biting hard into the wool when the skin came with it. He wobbled them grimly, noting again the price of Praag in the gap where his two smallest fingers had been. The Nippers had taken them in the last winter and half his toes. He'd almost starved that year, almost died—although, the hallucinations from the hunger had been a blessing in disguise: he had passed through most of the winter in a disoriented dream. Now there was no such comfort. With his other three fingers, he pulled off the right glove. The warmth of a glove hung on his hands for a moment, and then the burning began, the cold like a thousand nails on his skin. But he couldn't stop. He reached inside his coat, under the jacket, under the jerkin, up through his undershirts, where the fur-lined package bumped against his sweaty flesh. He pulled it out, for a moment leaving a suppurating wound in his layers of cloth, the cold air sucking in deep. With his left hand, he buttoned his coat again. With his right, he laid his package on a windowsill and began to unroll the fur-lined leather, methodically, carefully, reverently.

He hadn't killed before he came to Kislev. He'd killed for this.

It was a long-barrelled Bokha pistol, the kind the streltsi used. New issue, in perfect condition, sanded, oiled, and loaded. He had about five minutes before the oil began to harden, perhaps half that time before the powder would be too cold to catch first time. Time to go.

The servant who opened the door was unimportant—with one lunge, Ulle threw his body past him, ignoring the screaming pain as he forced his frozen muscles to spring into action. With the pistol up, he charged towards the guard at the foot of the stairs. The man

drew his sword, but by then the barrel was on his forehead, and he fell back on to the steps. Ulle caught the movement out of the corner of his eye, turned, and shot on reflex. The second guard stood for a second, scrabbling at the black hole in his chest and then fell to his knees. A gun was good for two things, Ulle knew: shooting and intimidation. He flicked the gun around and slammed the butt into the skull of the man on the stairs.

He grabbed at the guardsman's belt, taking the sword and the crossbow, and then a huge weight landed on his back. The sword dropped out of his hand. One thick arm snaked around his throat. A blade came the other direction. He shot his empty hand at it, sacrificing thick flesh to the hungry blade so he could grab the wrist. Hot blood sizzled as it hit the frosty blade.

Ulle jerked his head back, slamming it into what he hoped was the nose of his attacker. He seemed to hit, as the pressure lessened on his neck for a moment. Ulle curled forward next, pulling his strangler off his feet, and then he levered himself up from the stairs. He dropped the crossbow and grabbed the arm around his throat, locking his attacker to him. Then, he leapt backwards.

Ulle was a big man, and the floor was hard mountain stone. His opponent groaned from the blow, and Ulle drove his head back again. The hit was so hard Ulle lost his sight for a moment, his head seeming to roll back and forth like a storm-tossed boat. But he didn't need to see. He drove his head back again, and this time, he blacked out from the pain—but only for a second. And it was enough. When he came to, there was no grip on his neck, no pressure driving the blade into his hand. The man's cracked skull had left a star-shaped pattern of blood across the snow-sifted floor. Ulle lay for a moment and caught his breath, his head ringing like a temple bell.

Three guards. Three. That wasn't what he'd counted. The servant, he realised—not a servant. Another bodyguard. A hidden one. Maybe the priest wasn't as mad as everyone said. Maybe he did know just how tempting he was for a thief.

A door burst open, and another guard came in, pistol raised. He stopped to aim properly. Ulle's hand went to the crossbow, but it had fallen too far away. In a panic, he lashed out with his feet, slamming his ankle down on the hand-guard. The trigger flicked, and the bolt shot across the floor. The shooter flinched. The shot went high. Ulle had the sword a moment later, and he had the speed of adrenaline, and he had his hate. He left the corpse on top of his fellows and ran up the stairs. A moment later, he rushed down again and charged out the door. He scratched a handful of snow from the street and packed it against the bloody gash in his hand. By the time he reached the first landing, the flesh was completely numb.

No time to reload—the two shots would have woken half the street, let alone the people in the house. Even in this town the watch would come. Candles burned in the windows. The priest was awake, working, maybe already running, or hiding, or preparing some trap. But a gun was more than just a shot.

The priest was ready for him, behind his work-table, holding a wood-cutter's axe with bravado. A dozen candles illuminated the room that covered the entire top story. Books filled the shelves, along with other curios. Bottles, jars, and other things stood in corners, swinging in and out of the swaying shadows. It smelled of acid and of the tide. Ulle raised the pistol and said one word, "Gold."

The priest shook his head. "No," he said, with concern, but no fear. "Not again."

Ulle walked closer, cocking and aiming truer. "Your rings. Your purse. Now." But the priest did not move. Ulle began to bubble with fury. "NOW!" he yelled, waving the pistol in the idiot's face. "Are you brained? Do you not fear death?"

The priest stared at him then, with something resembling compassion. "This is Kislev, my son. We are already dead, all of us. Especially you."

The priest's eyes flickered beyond Ulle, and a shadow from across the room began to move forward. For a moment, it seemed like something from a half-forgotten dream, a memory of a shape suddenly remembered, as shadow and form at once became a Human-like figure. The smell of mud and clay made his eyes water. He blinked away the tears, too entranced to look away, too terrified to scream.

Once, as a boy, the neighbourhood bullies had thrown him in the canal and held him down until he had choked on mud. That memory knifed through his brain as once again he felt slick, foetid soil fill his throat and cheeks. A hard cold hand held his arm and then lifted him up as if he were a babe. He couldn't believe how fast he moved through the air—there was just the roar of exploding glass and the freezing thud as his body hit the snow below.

He felt something horrible happen to his jaw, felt it drag away from him like a flopping piece of skin on a sliced finger. He tried to spit out mud but it was like trying to grab a flame. Somehow, though, he got to his feet. There was enough hate left in him for that. Hate for Kislev. Hate for the stupid priest. Hate for whatever dark sorcery had brought that monster down upon him. He looked up. A dark shadow was framed in the shattered window above. Candles burned the curtains. It looked like nightmare given form.

He raised his empty pistol as if willing it to find life again and fire. But even if had a bullet, the snow had killed the powder by now, he knew. His ungloved fingers would be next. He had to get away, had to get warm. Then he saw the movement around him, heard voices through his ringing, ice-filled ears. The watch had come. He wondered if it was for him or for the Daemon above. He wondered if he cared.

There was no warning. He was expecting yells for surrender, talk of arrest, but there was just a mass retort, and bullets tore through his flesh, black blood dripping out behind them. As he fell, he looked up and saw that the fog had cleared. And there was the Tambour, and the Maiden, and Gnuthus the Ox. It reminded him that he hadn't seen his sign—the Limner's Line—since he came north. That was an Empire sign, not visible in this damned country. He hated that. He hated that he could not see his stars. And then he died.

* * *

Twenty-four hours later, the dirt shook and fell in the Bleakness, and fists and feet smashed through soil and frost. For a moment, Ulle wondered how the bullets could have grazed him. For a moment, he was glad they had buried him in the thick streltsi coat. Then he remembered he was in Kislev, and he hated it.

He hated the snow, and the cold, and the people. Hated the damned ice on the streets that crunched beneath his boots. Crunch. Hated the wind that burned through him. Crunch. Hated the city that mocked him. Crunch. Hated the starless sky. Crunch. Hated the world.

Hate.

Hate.

Hate.

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