



Of Bones and Blood

Encounters with the Dead
by Tyrus von Stadt

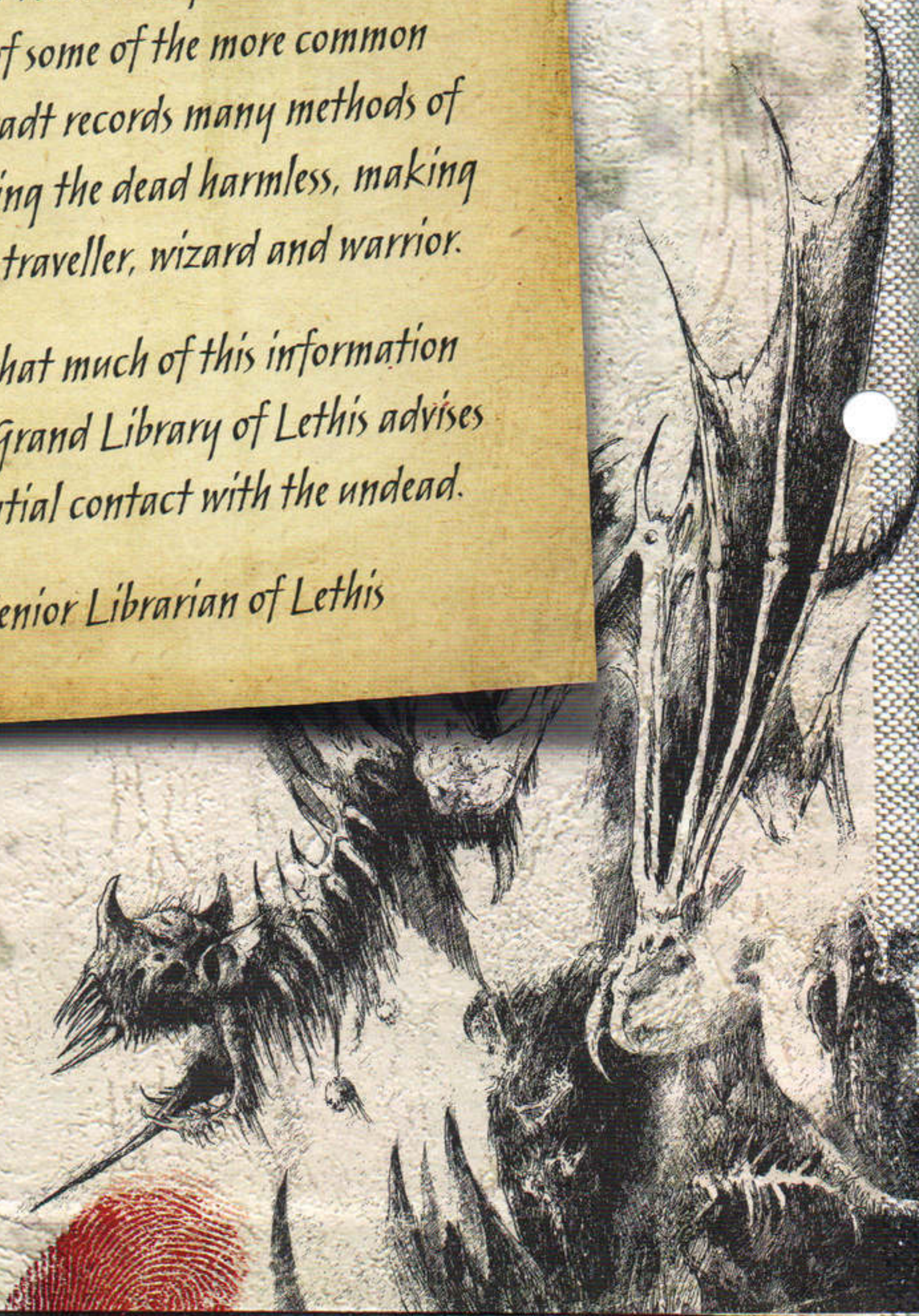


Welcome, reader, to the personal journals of one Tyrus von Stadt, Sigmar save his soul. The author was at once an artist, occultist, scientist and true son of Lethis. This journal is a record of von Stadt's interactions with, investigations of and observations on the undead. The accounts within are not suitable for those of a nervous disposition, and are graphic in their descriptions of the horrors that lurk in the expansive wilderness of Shyish.

The information contained within is considered to be amongst the most accurate ever recorded by mortal hands. Along with a detailed index of some of the more common undead creatures, Tyrus von Stadt records many methods of destroying, banishing or rendering the dead harmless, making this journal useful reading for traveller, wizard and warrior.

It should be noted, however, that much of this information has yet to be field tested. The Grand Library of Lethis advises against all but the most essential contact with the undead.

— Syllas Rothervale, Senior Librarian of Lethis



The Newly Dead



The undead creatures that are most likely to be confronted in the wilds of Shyish are created from the bodies of fallen mortals, most commonly duardin, aelves and humans. These creatures are commonly known as zombies. What follows are observations on these, the lowliest form of undead.

The most common undead creatures are raised from the bodies of the recently dead. We live in an age of war and disease, providing Necromancers and the like with easy access to fresh bodies. Naqash's curses can also raise the dead, as can the natural amethyst death magic that runs through the very bedrock of the Realm of Death.

These types of undead are given many names by the residents of

Shyish, including deadwalkers, fleshcrawlers, corpsefiends and simply, the living dead.

Zombies created from humans, duardin and aelves are slow-moving and weak. Those created from creatures such as dire wolves or dragons, however, are formidable indeed. Thankfully, the rotting body of a zombie usually falls apart quickly unless sustained by a powerful Necromancer.



Human Zombie

Recognisable by their shambling gait and foul, rotten stench.





Necromancers

My journeys have brought me into contact with several Necromancers. They are all dangerous, selfish magic-wielders who seek nothing more than to prolong their own life or carve out their own kingdoms with armies of undead followers. Nagash despises any Necromancers not bound to his will. They rarely lead long lives.



Dire Wolves

Far more terrifying than mere humanoid zombies, those created from the corpses of these beasts are not only incredibly fast, but retain their intelligence and ability to hunt in packs. They are a favourite pet of vampires and Necromancers alike. I am fortunate enough to have only seen these beasts from a great distance.



Corpse Carts

Powered by walking corpses, Corpse Carts are used in the armies of the undead to bolster their lines or interfere with enemy magic. The power brought to the battlefield on these foul conveyances can see the undead knit back together after being damaged.



Deadwalkers

While they are one of the least powerful forms of undead creature, Deadwalker zombies can prove dangerous to the unprepared. My advice to anyone who encounters a zombie is to flee. The creatures are usually slow and ponderous, with no intelligence at all. Unfortunately, this also means they feel no fear and will fight on despite terrible losses. If confronted by such creatures, keep moving, avoid being overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers. Aiming blows at the head and limbs of the creature produces the best results.

The Ancient Dead

In the course of my travels, I have learned that no deceased mortal is beyond the reach of powerful death magic, even if all that remains of their physical form is a fleshless skeleton.



A risen skeleton is an unsettling sight. Expressionless skulls and vacant eye sockets betray no emotion. The only sign of awareness is the soft glow of the evil magic which animates them. The majority of skeletal warriors lack the will to act independently. They are utterly bound to the will of Nagash, or to the Necromancer who raised them from the grave. They make a formidable army, for they are tireless and are far faster and more capable warriors than their zombie kin, fighting with a discipline few mortal armies can match. Terrifyingly, not all skeletal warriors are mindless automatons. Some are created from the cursed remains of powerful warrior-kings or their household champions. Whilst these skeletal leaders are still ultimately dominated by Nagash, they possess independent thought, and are capable of commanding armies of their lesser kin.

Deathrattle Legions

Scattered across the Mortal Realms are kingdoms of the grave, ruled over by ruthless undead kings. The skeletal armies they lead are referred to as the Deathrattle Legions.



Deathrattle Skeletons

The skeletal inhabitants of the Deathrattle Kingdoms go to war at the command of their kings. They are armed with rusted weapons and ancient armour, but follow their master's commands with absolute precision. Completely lacking remorse, they will continue to kill until ordered to stop.

Wight Kings

In life these cruel despots were great conquerors who crushed entire nations underfoot. Their hunger for war is so great that it continues in death. Expert commanders both proud and cunning, they will serve none save Nagash.

Black Knights

Clad in black iron astride skeletal steeds, Black Knights are the cavalry of the Deathrattle Legions. Armed with long lances and cruel blades, they crash into their foes with devastating force. Only the most resilient of shieldwalls can hope to turn back such a charge.

Grave Guard

Empowered by dark curses and wielding pitted weapons and rusting armour, the Grave Guard are elite skeletal infantry.

It is said that these champions were buried alongside their king and rise to serve him in death as they did in life.





Beasts of the Grave

All creatures are susceptible to the curse of undeath. The animated remains of even the most colossal of monsters may rise to wreak terror upon the living.

The Mortal Realms are home to many large and powerful monsters, and Shyish is certainly no exception. All of these beasts are susceptible to the animating power of death magic, and when they rise to undeath, the earth shakes beneath their feet. Thankfully for mortal kind, it takes a great concentration of power to raise such creatures from their graves, and so they remain rare indeed.

Nagash, in his infinite wisdom, has seen fit to employ such creatures in his armies, granting them as boons to his most faithful generals. When sent forth as beasts of war, such creatures are almost impossible to stop, for they are impervious to blows that would lay a living creature low, and are monstrous enough in size and strength to rip an entire legion of soldiers limb from limb. My advice to those confronted by such a creature is to pray for divine intervention, for nought else can save you.



Unholy Mounts

The Ghoul Kings and Soulblight Vampires are known to have a particular affinity for winged undead creatures, and the most powerful and insane of their number will even ride them to battle. Often the mere presence of such a creature is enough to send whole armies running and screaming for the hills.

Terrorgheists



Terrorgheists were once living creatures, before Shyishan sorcery twisted them into winged corpses of rotting flesh and splintered bone. They are often bound to the service of a Ghoul King, and share their masters' vampiric hunger, seeking out the largest and most powerful foes to devour. A Terrorgheist's sonic wail is its most potent weapon, for it can shatter the minds of its prey. Those not slain outright are reduced to little more than gibbering wrecks.

Zombie Dragons



Even the noblest of creatures may fall victim to powerful necromantic curses, and dragons are no exception. Zombie Dragons are utterly mindless and can only be commanded by the strongest wielders of necromantic power. Those who have encountered these creatures report that they are surrounded by a terrible stench of death and bring with them a chill wind. Unlike its living kin, a zombie dragon does not possess breath of frost, fire or poison, but instead exhales clouds of raw death magic that reduce those engulfed by them to withered husks.



The Flesh-Eaters

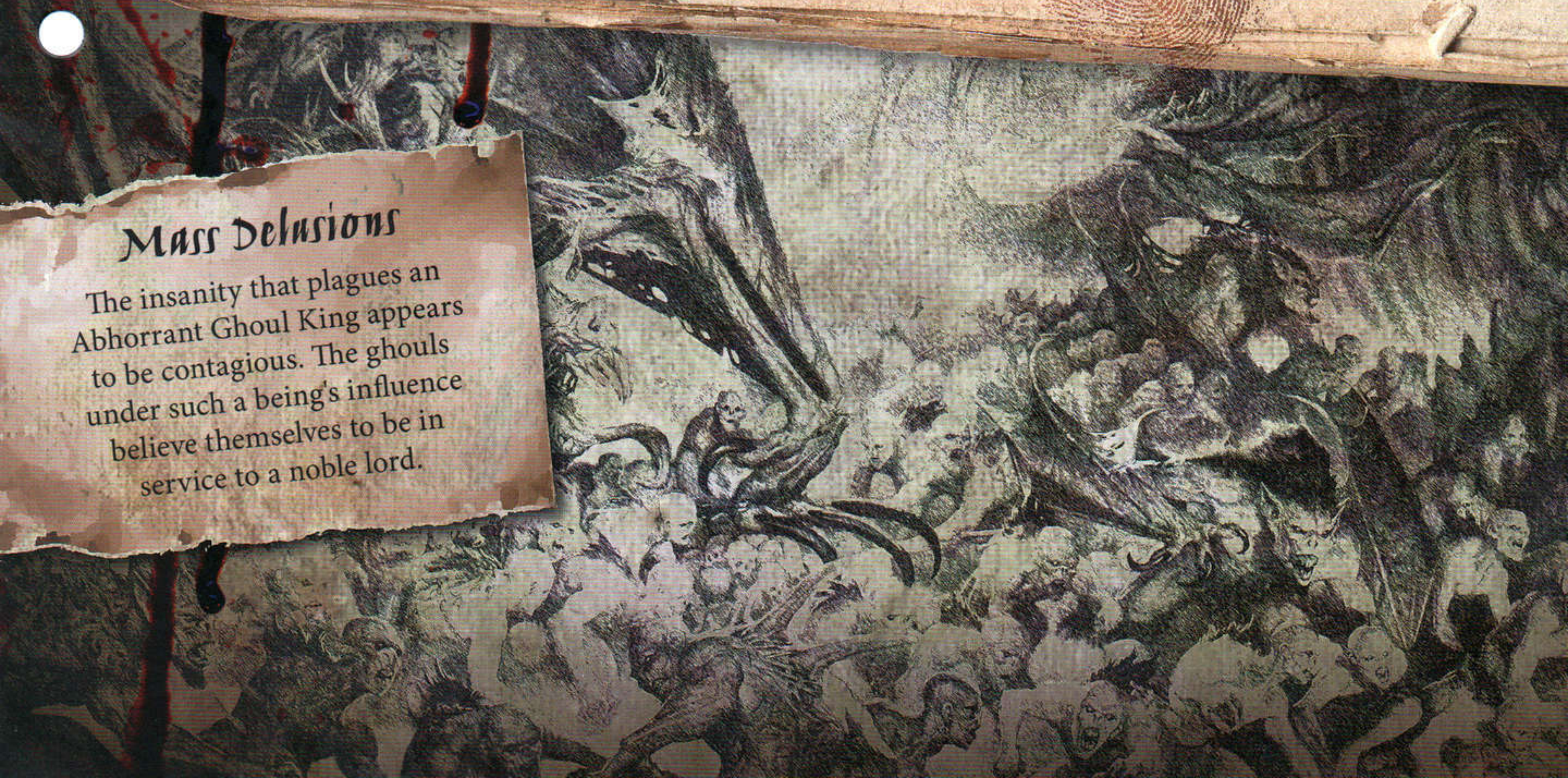
Carion Courts

Where famine and war run rife, mortals are driven to desperate acts in order to survive. Those who turn to cannibalism are forever cursed, devolving into hideous, hunched creatures. These desperate wretches often fall into the service of the mad vampires known as abhorrants, joining their Flesh-eater Courts.

Where a Flesh-eater Court claims dominion, the stench of decay hangs thick in the air, and bones and gristle litter the ground. Winged undead monstrosities patrol the skies above, and any who stray within their territory are swiftly torn asunder by a ravening tide of insane ghouls.

Mass Delusions

The insanity that plagues an Abhorrant Ghoul King appears to be contagious. The ghouls under such a being's influence believe themselves to be in service to a noble lord.





Abhorrants

Abhorrants are the true masters of the Flesh-eater Courts. They are, of course, utterly insane, but no less deadly for it. They are bestial creatures that move with lightning speed, their vampiric nature granting them incredible dexterity and strength. At the battle of the Sanguine Ford, I witnessed the Abhorrant Ghoul King known as Sliverglut slay no less than a score of Liberators with his bare claws.

Mordants

The lowliest members of a Ghoul King's court are known as mordants. These hunched and hideous creatures pierce their skin with bone trophies and wield crude clubs crafted from the remains of past victims. Some mordants are even more terrifying. Crypt Horrors tower over their Crypt Ghoul kin, and winged Crypt Flayers descend to pluck unwary mortals from the battlefield and feast upon them.



Malignants



Often it is that which we cannot see that scares us most, and for this reason, the gheist inspires more fear than any creature of flesh and blood. These cursed spectres, devoid of physical form, are often referred to as malignants. These are not the benign shades that inhabit the underworlds of Shyish, but the tortured souls of the damned.

Animated by



amethyst magic, these hateful spectres seek to avenge themselves upon the living, for whom they bear a burning hatred. Malignants are terrible foes indeed, for no armour is proof against their grasping claws and pitted blades. Even skilled warriors may find themselves unable to strike such a creature down, for only those who possess an iron will can land a telling blow upon their spectral forms.

Curse of Nagash

The term malignant is used to refer to any evil spirit without corporeal form. Some malignants, such as Cairn Wraiths, rise to undeath because they are filled with hatred and cruelty and refuse to pass on to the underworlds. Others are created by Nagash, who punishes souls he perceives to have slighted him by cursing them to an eternity of undeath. Slowly but surely, Nagash has established control over most malignant spirits. The majority of malignant gheists now serve in the spectral Nighthaunt Processions, where they console themselves by taking out their anger and frustration on the living in a vain attempt to drown out their own anguish.



The Condemned

The condemned are the spirits of prisoners, executioners and jailors. The most numerous spirits amongst these hordes are the Chainrasps. Even in death, these near-mindless spectres remain bound by heavy chains and manacles. They are driven only by a jealous hatred for the living.



Wraiths

Where the majority of the Condemned lack any form of free will, other malignants are capable of independent thought. Wraiths such as the Knights of Shrouds, Guardians of Souls and Cairn Wraiths may be bound to serve Nagash, but are just as cunning and intelligent as any mortal commander. Cairn Wraiths in particular are feared by travellers in Shyish, for they haunt ancient ruins and tombs, and delight in slaughtering the unwary.

Wild Gheists



Shyish is a wild, untamed place. Outside of the cities prowl countless horrors, with none more terrifying than the restless dead. Wild and furious, these feral wraiths do not serve Nagash directly.

But their unending hunger for revenge on the living pleases the Great Necromancer.

While most of the dead are bound to Nagash's will, many still roam the wilds untamed. The necroquake only made things worse, causing the dead to rise in countless numbers. These creatures do not fight for coin, or glory, or for the will of any great master, but simply because they are filled with fury and despair. I know not why they hate the living. Perhaps they envy we who still have flesh. Perhaps it is a consequence of the strange punishments they are said to have suffered

before dying. Perhaps they simply crave the warmth of our blood. Whatever the case, they can easily slay an unprepared traveller. Stay away from ancient grave sites, even when you can be sure that not even bones remain – these spirits need no bodies to kill. Should you be forced into battle with such creatures, use whatever magic you have, and imbue each weapon strike with utter conviction that it will harm them. This is the only way to drive off these incorporeal killers.

Spirit Hosts

Among the most common gheists encountered in Shyish are the Spirit Hosts. These horrific entities are formed from various lesser spirits that have clustered together. It is claimed that Spirit Hosts no longer possess individuality or identity, apart from a flickering recognition for mortal life. They hate the living, and use their ghostly claws and spectral daggers to tear travellers limb from limb. Armour offers little protection against such a vile creature. A Spirit Host can merely reach through a breastplate and stop your heart with a single icy touch.



Banshees

Legends claim that Banshees are the spirits of those betrayed in life. Whether this is true or not, Banshees bring terror to the living. Not only are they capable of killing with a chill touch, but also with their terrifying shrieks. Even the bravest traveller may find themselves literally scared to death by a sudden, wailing assault. In ancient times, Banshees were a rare and solitary sight. Now, however, these vengeful creatures gather together in screaming flocks.



*Spectral champions
take many forms, all of
which should be avoided
if you value your life.*

Cursed Champions

Those who were particularly powerful – or wicked – in life have too often kept their wilfulness even in death. Such spirits are a dire threat indeed. Their unending hunger for slaughter is dangerous enough, but the true horror of these creatures is their ability to direct the wrath of their fellow gheists. Unliving champions are followed by great gatherings of feral spirits, and together they prowl through the wilds of Shyish. If you encounter such a dreadful creature, run far and fast.



Ossiarch Bonereapers



Deep in the Realm of Death, you can find cities, kingdoms and nations. The largest empire belongs to the Ossiarch Bonereapers. While they may seem civilised on the surface, these creatures are perhaps the most cunning and deadly of the undead.

The Ossiarch Bonereapers are not mere mouldering corpses or rattling skeletons. Scholars claim that each is made up of a vast collection of souls housed in a body of sculpted bone. Each Bonereaper is a thinking, independent being, though they are as unquestioning in their duty as even the lowliest Chainrasp. The Ossiarchs claim they wish to bring order



to the realms. They even negotiate with the living in the pursuit of their goals. To work with such creatures, however, is to guarantee your own doom. The Ossiarchs demand an ever-increasing tithe of bones. Some townships have emptied their ancestors' graves to meet the Bonereapers' demands. Others have sacrificed limbs or slain friends to keep the Ossiarchs satisfied. If you encounter an Ossiarch warhost, be sure to have the bones to pay them, or they will take yours as payment for your trespass.

The Triptych

The Ossiarch Bonereapers are prideful creatures. They see themselves not as mindless destroyers, but as empire builders creating works that surpass Hammerhal, the Living City or any of Sigmar's holdings in the Mortal Realms. If you find yourself deep within the lands of the Ossiarch Bonereapers, you may bear witness to the Triptych. This trio of towering statues dominates the plains of Praetoris and represents the very greatest of the Ossiarch lieges.



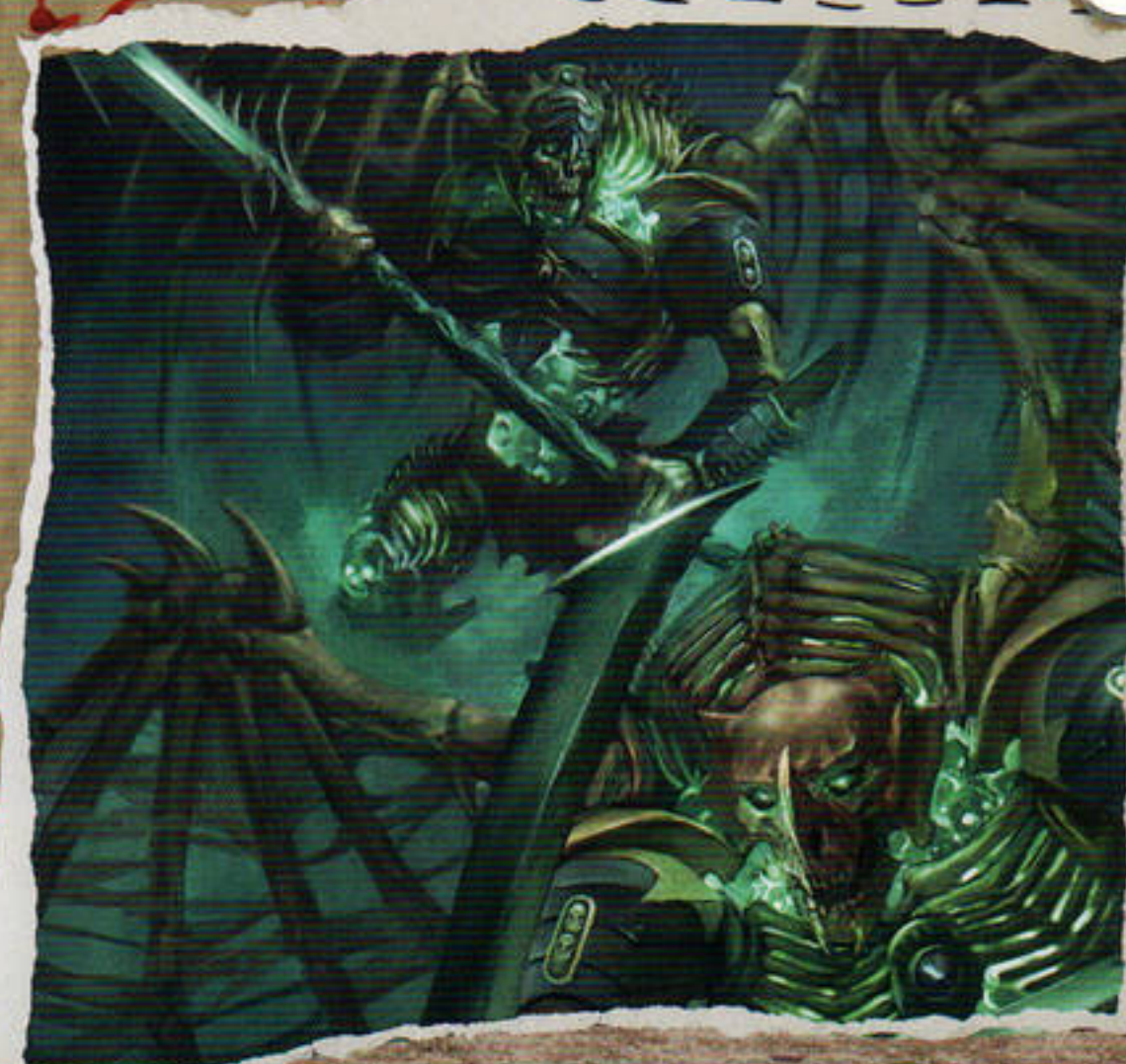
Emissarian caste

The society of the Ossiarch Bonereapers is organised into castes. In your journeys, you may be offered a bargain by a member of the Emissarian caste. These are the wisest of the Ossiarchs. Each is trained in a different discipline, from dark magic to political manipulation. These creatures may seem intelligent and civilised, but beware their honeyed words. The contracts and deals offered by the Ossiarchs are legendary, for they always end in doom for the living.



Priad caste

If you are particularly unfortunate, you may encounter members of the Priad caste. These warriors have been twisted into bizarre new forms, all the better to conquer the living. All manner of constructs can be found amongst their ranks, from four-armed swordsmen to winged monstrosities. The overseers of the Priad caste have even shaped living siege catapults known as Morteck Crawlers to better destroy the cities of the living.



The Ossiarch Bonereapers come in many forms, from diplomats, to builders to warriors. All of them wish to see the living turned into slaves.

Thorac caste

If you see a member of the Thorac caste, you are most likely doomed. These unliving warriors make up the majority of the military strength of the Ossiarch Empire, and they are sent to enforce the tithe and conquer new lands. Each member of this caste is a warrior through and through. No words can sway them from their duty, and no trinkets will convince them to spare you. All that you can do is run – but know that they will pursue you forever to collect their terrible tithe.



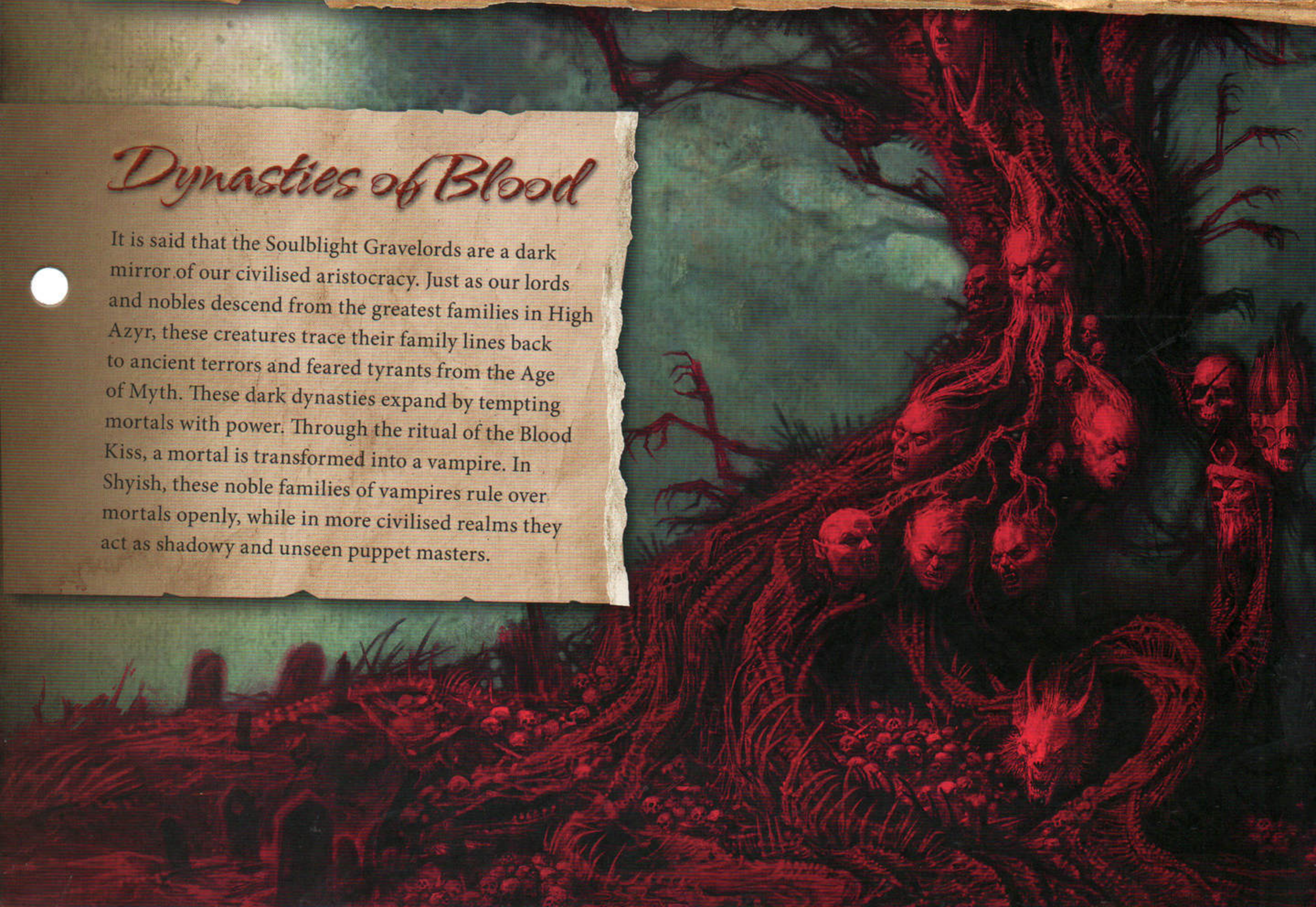
Soulblight Gravelords



Darkness walks among us. It shares our cities, our streets and our homes. We are the hunted, and they are the hunters. I write of the Soulblight Gravelords – a curse that has haunted humanity since the earliest days of recorded history. Long ago, these creatures made a dark pact, gaining vast powers and transforming into blood-hungry beasts. While a Soulblight Gravelord may pretend to be a civilised creature, they are deadlier than any hulking orruk or rampaging beastman. Sorcery and slaughter are simple for such creatures. We mere mortals are their cattle, waiting to be slaughtered.

Dynasties of Blood

It is said that the Soulblight Gravelords are a dark mirror of our civilised aristocracy. Just as our lords and nobles descend from the greatest families in High Azyr, these creatures trace their family lines back to ancient terrors and feared tyrants from the Age of Myth. These dark dynasties expand by tempting mortals with power. Through the ritual of the Blood Kiss, a mortal is transformed into a vampire. In Shyish, these noble families of vampires rule over mortals openly, while in more civilised realms they act as shadowy and unseen puppet masters.





Dread Aristocrats

Many vampires of the Soulblight Gravelords are possessed of a cold, strange beauty that even veteran warriors find enthralling. They dress and behave much like mortal aristocrats, even going to war clad in incredible finery. Despite appearances, each is a merciless killer.

Feral Horrors

Some vampires abandon all subtlety and give in to the bestial curse that haunts their race. They appear as a cross between humans and beasts, swollen with horrible muscle, their limbs twisted into predatory new shapes.



Undead Legions

Vampires are thankfully rare, but their minions are not. Each of the Soulblight Gravelords has an instinctive mastery over the dead. They summon vast hordes of shambling Deadwalker Zombies and relentless Deathrattle Skeletons.

Beasts of the Grave

From flocks of blood sucking bats to flesh-hungry undead wolves, the Soulblight Gravelords bend Shyishan beasts to their will as easily as they beguile any human.



Unliving Monsters

Some of the Mortal Realms' most terrifying monsters serve the Soulblight Gravelords. Ancient stories claim that these creatures are vampires who gave in to their true nature.

Death Engines



If all that Necromancers could accomplish was raising the dead, they would be terrifying enough. However, the dark arts of death allow not just for resurrection and destruction, but also for the creation of new and horrific constructs.

When venturing through the Realm of Death, you will be met with all manner of morbid constructions. Vast creatures made of bone



stride the plains, cast in deathly splendour by their makers. Necromancers entomb their masters in engines of death magic, creating vile storms of sorcery. Indeed, if you are brave or foolish enough to venture into the lands of the Ossiarch Empire, you will see entire cities forged from bone. These places are inhabited not by the shambling dead, but by new constructs that are disciplined and utterly obedient to Nagash.

Dread Fabricators

Since necromancy was first practiced, the bones, blood and souls of mortals have been coveted by dark sorcerers. Their arts give them the power to reshape mortal remains into new forms. A Necromancer of modest power may be able to build a shambling throne of bone. Meanwhile, it is said that the Boneshapers of the Ossiarch Empire are able to manipulate bone as if it were clay. They are said to be capable of working terrible miracles, such as forging entire armies from fields of scattered bones and constructing vast citadels in a matter of hours.

In Shyish, and other lands plagued by the dead, mortals must take care to protect their bodies in death as well as life to ensure their remains cannot be turned against their allies.





Ossiarch Creations

The Ossiarch Bonereapers are a twisted mirror to mortal folk. Just as we work to shape the Mortal Realms into a place that can sustain life, these creatures work to turn them into a land of death. The Ossiarchs create a vast range of constructs. Nothing in their lands is alive, as everything is created from dead bodies. It is said that even the birds that circle their towering citadels are necromantic constructs.

The most terrifying constructs used by the Ossiarchs are the Gothizzar Harvesters. These hulking brutes look like mindless monsters, but they move with terrible purpose. Not only are they deadly, but they gather the bones of those they slay. They can swiftly strip the flesh off entire regiments of infantry and turn the bodies into raw materials for building new constructs.

Necromantic Creations

Necromancers are shunned in most civilised places. Unlike the mages found in Sigmar's cities, who learn magic from tomes of ancient knowledge, a Necromancer receives power from the Lord of Undeath, Nagash.

Necromancers build all manner of deathly engines from the stolen remains of the dead. Some bind several Deadwalker Zombies together with wood and steel to make Corpse Carts. These repulsive wagons can be seen throughout Shyish, gathering more bodies to be used by the deathly wizards. The most skilled Necromancers build sinister Mortis Engines and towering mobile thrones from which vampiric lords hunt the living. It is said that to even approach such a construct would cause a mortal to wither and die immediately.

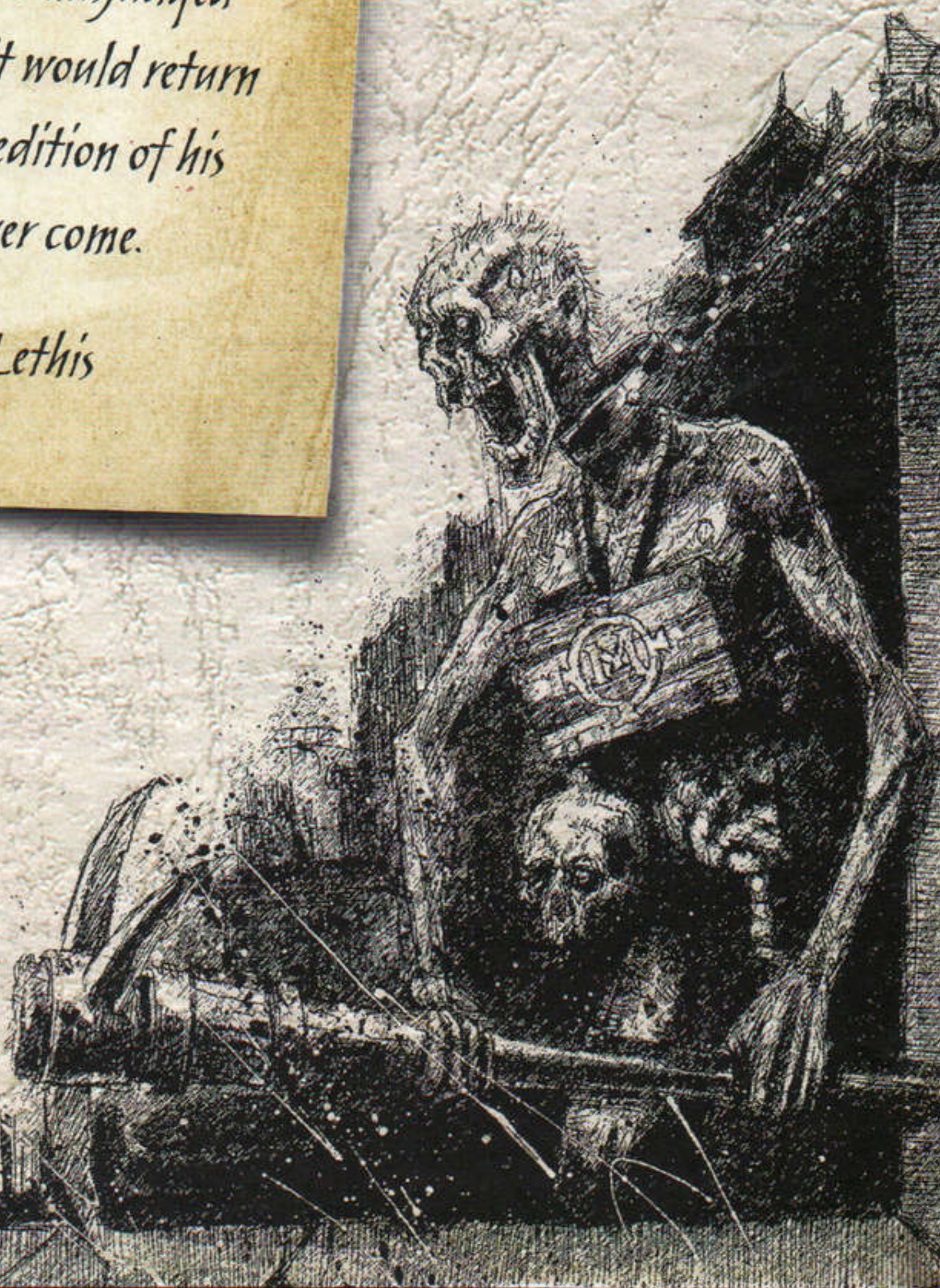




Thus concludes *Of Bones And Blood* - the greatest and last work of Tyrus von Stadt. This is the only known copy of the manuscript. While copies of the guidebook were scribed in Lethis for a time, the Order of Azyr outlawed the replication of the texts and destroyed von Stadt's original copy lest it spread dangerous knowledge about the dead.

Tyrus von Stadt remains missing. After his works were destroyed, the scholar fled into the wilds around Lethis to seek any who would listen to his findings. The copy you hold was found soaked in blood, nailed to the chest of a Deadwalker Zombie that bore a striking resemblance to von Stadt himself. On the cover was a message that claimed the tome is full of lies and misunderstandings, and that von Stadt had 'misjudged' the undead. It went on to promise that von Stadt would return to Lethis to write a revised and more informed edition of his book. We pray to Sigmar that day will never come.

- Sylas Rothervale, Senior Librarian of Lethis



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