

Run! The Horseman Comes!

"...the ghost rides forth to the scene of battle in nightly quest of his head; and that the rushing speed with which he sometimes passes along the Hollow, like a midnight blast, is owing to his being belated, and in a hurry to get back to the church-yard before daybreak."

-- Washington Irving

The Northeast Quarter of the city is a shattered ruin. Spectral fires still burn, even years from the night the comet struck. Autumnal flames flicker and the sky glows a macabre orange hue as the night mists creep up from the river and the docks. The Merchants' Quarter, so-called for the wealth of trade and the Guild-houses within the bounds of its streets, still shines, but no longer with the glitter of gold. Now it is the bale-fires which light dark corners where fell deeds occur.

Wealth and opulence marked this district before the fall of the city. Sewers carried waste of horse and merchant alike away from brokering stables and wealthy homes. The streets were built over what were once small tributaries of the river, now become tunnels beneath the ground where rat-men and worse are found to dwell. Lanes lined with oak trees could be found in the wealthiest blocks, now littered instead with shattered cobbles, torn roots, and blasted walls.

Some say he was a mercenary, a servant who guarded a wealthy guildier from all fates save the last one. Others say he was a criminal, a highwayman, who met the chopping block, his horse sold to the highest bidder. Yet others fear he is the hand of Morr himself, rising from the grave to punish the wicked.

But they agree on one thing. Whatever once he was, matters little. When the mist rises from the river, and

the fires burn in the night, the Horseman rides, rising up from the bloody tree, seeking to claim his head.

And none but the river can stop him.

terrain and setup

Set up all the buildings into a single street, with no gaps along the sides. Behind the buildings are impassable ruins, although the buildings themselves are still accessible. The only way out is along the street. The street may be as winding as you like and should not be too narrow to fight in, but can have narrow bottlenecks at some points.

Set up buildings along either side of the street, making a route roughly 8" wide at its widest between the buildings, and blocking any narrow alleys in between them with scatter terrain such as wagons, barricades, crates, and barrels. Scatter terrain within the bounds of the street is quite welcome, of course, both because it could slow down running warriors,



but also because it could provide useful cover during flight, if the other fleeing warband should choose [sensibly] to attack while chance provides.

Capping one end of the 4' long street, a bridge ends the route, crossing over an open section of sewer. Any bridge should be suitable, however modeled.

At the other end, the road is blocked by the large and bloody tree, with four feet of slightly winding street between them. For atmosphere, the tree is encouraged to be large, with corpses and bones among its roots and branches, and pooled blood on the ground beneath. Flocks of crows and ravens are, of course, entirely appropriate.

If determined to use Games Workshop scenery, one of the gnarled and pestilent "Garden of Nurgle" trees should suffice. But... build your own! There is an excellent and now ancient article written for White Dwarf about building chaos trees for the older editions of *Beasts of Chaos*, that should help.



special rules

The warbands are mid-fight when the horrific events unfold at dusk. As such, both warbands begin mixed together in the same general area, in the street, with no warrior being closer than two feet from the bridge [24 inches], and all just shy of two feet from the tree. No warrior can be closer than 1" from any other. Players should alternate placing a hero or henchman group, until all warriors have been placed.

Each warband gets D3 warpstone shards to allocate among its members, no more than one shard to each. Yes, anyone making it across the bridge with a shard actually gets to keep it. Anyone not making it across the bridge - whether routing or going down in combat or from the Horseman - does not. Carried warpstone shards follow the usual rules in the rulebook regarding being carried, dropped, etc.

Any warband members with mounts do NOT have access to their mounts during this scenario. Obviously, they refused to cross the bridge and approach the Bloody Tree. To make up for this enforced penalty, those normally mounted warriors now forced to be on foot each get an extra warpstone shard to carry in addition to the allocated D3 each warband is given. Good luck.

The Horseman

The Horseman cannot be killed, but his implacable advance can be briefly slowed. Each hit from missile fire will drive the Horseman and his mount D6" back toward the tree, until it reaches the roots of the tree at the end of the street, further than which it cannot be driven.

At the end of *each player's turn* the Horseman moves 4" down the street toward the bridge. Yes, this should total 8" per round as the horse drifts down the street accompanied by a feeling of horrifying dread.

If for some reason there is a desire to attempt this scenario with three or more warbands [a *very* crowded street fight!], instead give the Horseman his own turn *ahead* of all of the other warbands, and he

will instead then move 8" toward the bridge, getting the very first turn of the game.

At the end of each player's turn, at the end of the Horseman's move, any warriors who are fully behind the front edge of the Horseman's base as he rides down the street are taken Out of Action. The Horseman does not [and cannot] charge or be charged. There is no roll to hit, no roll to wound. Whether succumbing to the palpable air of terror which follows in the Horseman's wake, or struck down by the horrifying apparition, or undone by the sorcerous fog at his heels, they go down. The Horseman has no pity, no remorse. He cares not for the living or the dead. He seeks only his own lost skull.

warbands

Both warbands are set up with no model being closer than 24" from the bridge end of the street. Remember that you cannot be closer than 1" from opposing warriors. Players alternate placing a hero or a henchman group until all warriors are placed.

starting the game

The warband with the largest number of members takes the first turn, the warband with the fewest members goes last.

Remember that warriors who are within 8" of a member of another warband cannot run.

Remember that the Horseman cannot be killed, but his implacable advance can be briefly slowed. Each hit from missile fire will drive the Horseman and his mount D6" back toward the tree, until it reaches the roots of the tree at the end of the street, further than which it cannot be driven.

ending the game

When *all* warriors are either across the bridge, or out of action, the scenario ends.

As each warrior makes it across the bridge, set them aside in chronological order. The first one across *and*

the last one across before the scenario ends, gain additional experience.

The winning warband is the one to first get all not-Out-Of-Action warriors across the bridge. Yes, if one warband only gets one member across the bridge, and it is not the last active warrior across the bridge before the scenario ends, that warband will count as the winner once the scenario ends. And will likely have a lot of injury rolls to make.

experience

+1 Survives. If a Hero or Henchmen group survives the battle they gain +1 Experience.

+1 Winning Leader(s). The leader of the winning warband gains +1 Experience.

+1 Per Enemy Out of Action. Any Hero earns +1 Experience for each enemy he puts out of action.

+1 For the warrior making it across the bridge first.

+1 For the warrior making it across the bridge last.

wyrdstone

Your warriors earn one shard of wyrdstone for each counter still in their possession at the end of the battle.



Modeling the Tree:

Blighted oak trees have appeared as featured terrain pieces in a couple of issues of White Dwarf over the years, such as in White Dwarf #284, September 2003, which even featured a “how to build one” guide. Given the absence of a tree in Washington Irving’s classic, the inspiration for the tree in this scenario is obviously and deliberately the 1999 film “Sleepy Hollow” (which is a good year, after all, given that both the film and Mordheim are now celebrating twenty-year anniversaries).

Bones, skulls, and blood among the roots and branches should do a fine job of making any model tree suitable grim [and gothic], so the creation of the tree need not be an odious task.

Modeling the Horseman:

Mounted undead models, whether skeletal or ghostly, can make for a good Horseman, by simply not including the head when building, especially any armed with axes or scythes. Black Knights, Hexwraiths, Dreadblade Harrows, all are easy conversions. Bretonnians are currently out of production, but many companies make “mounted knight” models. I used the old Bretonnian general-with-axe model to make my own Headless Horseman. The Freeguild Outriders may be comparable, but are a more complex conversion, as they come with firearms rather than with hand weapons.



My Horseman model. - A.



Two versions of a “blighted oak” from issues of White Dwarf. The first includes a guide to building it. The second was based on the first.

So... WHY the Headless Horseman?

Well, for several reasons. To begin with, Washington Irving's classic short story is one of my favourite ghost stories, and I tell ghost stories professionally, so I have read *many* of them. For another, Mordheim lends itself to gothic "Halloween" themes. For a third, the Tim Burton film *Sleepy Hollow* is celebrating its twentieth birthday this year, just as Mordheim is doing. Both were released in 1999, and became 'cult favourites,' with a long-lasting and dedicated fan-base.

Halloween scenarios for Mordheim have been written and published repeatedly over the years, and have taken on zombies, vampires, ghosts, and even werewolves [The Thing In The Woods]. Most of those scenarios involve the warbands trying to find and then fight the monster in question.

I wanted to focus instead on being hunted, and on trying to escape.

Looking at the GorkaMorka scenarios, pursuit and escape get a whole category in their scenario design, and I did initially consider a "rolling road" scenario here, but then considered the difficulty of moving the much more elaborate terrain down-table in Mordheim, and realized that would be untenable. Instead, I needed to figure out a way to still feel that onrushing pressure to stay ahead, while limiting the actual table distance involved.

That meant aiming for an inexorable advance instead of speed, but one that felt faster than the escaping heroes. And one that would still provide a challenge. Something that would feel unstoppable, something that would feel too fast to escape, something that might entail difficult choices, but which CAN still be bested.

Some of those difficult choices are inherent. No running when opposing models are within 8" means slowing the opposing warband so as to pull ahead and allow for running can be a solid strategy - but will likely sacrifice those engaging in combat so as to slow them down. Some models carrying wyrdstone shards means some of your warriors then become

more valuable than others. First AND last getting extra experience means that pushing the envelope of risk could pay off.

One of those difficult choices is created by borrowing another element from GorkaMorka: Mutie Raiders and push-back.

Borrowing that element of the Mutie Raiders rules from Digganob means that it might be a good choice to stand your ground and shoot at the Horseman, to sacrifice that warrior's movement to be able to buy a few valuable inches for the rest of the warband. And if the shot hits, and if the push-back roll is good, it could prove well worth the delay. How much do you trust your dice? Who do you choose to take that risk?

The year is 1999. And the Horseman Comes.

How quickly can you run?

