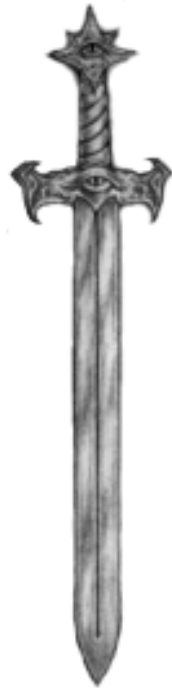


A WARPSTONE PUBLICATION

THE TOWER OF BLACK PORTALS

Part Three of the Saga of the Black Anvil

By Paul "Wiggy" Wade-Williams



This scenario is the second of two sequels to "The Missing Children of Regensdorf". This first appeared in Warpstone issue 8 and then in Corrupting Influence: The Best Of Warpstone Volume One.

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RECENT EVENTS & PLOT OVERVIEW

Many moons ago, the fabled Black Anvil of legend resurfaced once more, this time in the hands of a crazed Imperial noble, Baron Ennum von Regensdorf. An insidious (but far-fetched) plot to take over the Empire was bravely foiled by the adventurers, but they now have the Chaotic Anvil in their possession.

Following advice, they travelled across the interior of the Empire to a way temple of Verena, known as the Alum-O, in search of answers on how to destroy the Anvil once and for all. At the temple they were forced to fend off an assault by goblins; lots and lots of goblins. With the temple safe once more and the information they need in their possession the adventurers have once more left the safety of civilisation towards the Tower of Black Portals.

Unfortunately, the demonist who created the Anvil is still in existence through demonic pacts as an undead, a Liche, of formidable power and he is actively seeking the Anvil. The adventurers have another long trek across the Empire ahead of them and as they near the location of the demonist's lair, the Tower of Black Portals, which lies nestled in the Grey Mountains, they find themselves hunted by orcs under the control of the demonist.

The fate of the Empire, and maybe the Old World, now rests in the hands of the adventurers, and the road ahead is both windy and treacherous.

THE TOWER OF BLACK PORTALS

The Tower stands high atop a pinnacle of rock, nestled in the interior of the Grey Mountains. Created by foul demonic magic and the souls of a hundred sacrifices, it has weathered time untouched for over 300 years and its inhabitants are from planes of existence untravelling by sane men even in their worst nightmares.

The strangest feature of the Tower are its internal doorways. Each doorway is roughly six feet by three feet in size and is filled with blackness; an inky void stands where the door should. In order to pass through the doors one must merely walk into the void, which at first refuses to yield; although continued gentle pressure breaks through the resistance. The sensation of passing through the door is much like walking through treacle, slow, awkward and suffocating. Although passing through the door takes but a few moments, it seems like much longer and small figures can be seen moving out of the corner of the walker's eye and their cries for mercy can easily be heard. These are the souls that are bound into the tower's walls, and they are relatively harmless to the adventurers' bodies. Each time the adventurers pass through the doors they must make a *Willpower* Test.

Each subsequent door they pass through gives them a +10 bonus to their Tests, as they grow hardened to the effect. For every Test they fail they gain an Insanity Point; the pitiful wailings of the trapped souls troubling their minds. No matter how many times the adventurers use the doors they only gain the one point.

Once, the doors allowed the Liche to travel anywhere in the tower immediately, merely by stating the name of his destination as he entered the portal. That magic has long since failed and the Liche has yet to repair it. Instead, each door now goes to the last room used by the Liche before the magic failed. Coming back through a doorway presents a great mystery to the walker, for the return trip does not take the traveller to the location he left from, but instead to the room the Liche last used (as mentioned above.) With the doors broken, the Tower has become a maze.

No sound or light can penetrate the doors, so characters who pass through are isolated from the fellows. If an adventurer is tied by a rope and enters a doorway, his colleagues feel the rope shake violently and then go slack. Pulling it back reveals that it seems to have frayed through.

Although the Liche, Carolus Magister, has been rebuilding his strength for the last few years, he has not bothered to renovate the Tower. Much of it lies broken and disused, especially since the failure of the portals within it (see above.)

1) Entrance Hall:

The floor, walls and ceiling of this high-ceilinged chamber are made from a single piece of marble. The columns are also made of marble, and seem to grow from the floor. No joints can be seen on any of the pillars, nor is there a seam where join the floor.

At the far end of the chamber is a raised dais with several steps leading up to it. Upon the dais sits a marble throne, which is, in fact a powerful magical artifact and is discussed in more details in the Appendix.

From here the demonologist, Carolus Magister, would 'greet' visitors and, if they offended or annoyed him, he would use one of the spells contained within the throne. His Orc commanders know what fate would befall them if they were ordered to visit the throne room!

2) Council Chamber:

This room acts as a council chamber for the Liche and his Black Orc commanders. It also doubled as a room where the Liche could meet with visitors (yes, he did have some guests when he was alive). It has fallen into some disuse, although several meetings have taken place since the Liche reawakened recently.

The chamber is dominated by a large, circular table, around which are placed eight comfortable chairs. The table is still pretty sturdy, although its surface is badly scarred, and the chairs are rather mouldy. The room contains no other ornamentation at all, although the floor by several of the chairs is stained by a rust-coloured liquid. This is blood from guests and Orc commanders who upset the Liche.

The table does contain something strange however - an engraving is carved in the table's surface near one of the chairs. Characters with *Magical Sense* or *Identify Magical Artifact* can identify the engraving as being magical, although they cannot determine anything else about it.

When the room was in use the Liche had a powerful enchantment in effect - it stopped other spellcasters from using magic of any type in the room. Now, the warding is very faded and other spellcasters find that their magic only fails if they themselves fail a *Willpower* Test, made before the spell is released. Magic items with charges or temporary powers also require such a roll to be activated. Magical weapons, armour and the like work as normal, although once they were left non-magical whilst in the room.

Trying to remove the engraving from the table by cutting it out destroys its power, as does scratching it off with a weapon.

3) Black Orc Barracks:

This room once served as the barracks for the Liche's bodyguard of Black Orcs. The barracks consists of six separate rooms which housed six Orcs each. The rooms are full of old and rotten bedding and rats live amongst the filth.

The Orcs' rooms also contains some equipment, although time has damaged most of it beyond repair. Pieces of armour, weapons and items of clothing are all to be seen lying around. If the party spends an hour searching the whole barracks they may find a few silver shillings. Those looking should make *Observe* Tests. If successful the character has found 3d6 shillings hidden amongst the debris.

Any character spending more than two hours rummaging through the rubbish must make a *Toughness* x 10 roll to avoid cutting himself on something sharp and suffering a single infected wound (regardless of *Toughness* or armour).

4) Arcane Library:

Natural wear and tear, as well as several adventuring parties passing through, has damaged or ruined much of what was once an outstanding library of the magical

arts. The walls are lined with rotten and broken shelves and books and huge reams of paper are scattered all over the floor in an untidy mess. Many of the pages have rotted or succumbed to mould.

An *Observe* Test, as well as an hour of time spent searching through the debris, will allow the party to find some undamaged or partially damaged grimoires that may be of interest to them in the future. These are listed below. Two of the books are related to the arts of demonology and are unlikely to be of immediate use to the adventurers (although they may encourage them turn to the dark powers).

Grimoire of the Black Arts: This tome is bound in blackened human skin and is centuries old. This is the first book that Carolus ever possessed on the black arts and it is badly damaged. The remaining fragment only contains the spells of *Summon Guardian*, *Summon Magical Aid* and *Summon Demon Hoard*. The book is written in the Arcane Language - Demonic.

A Basic Guide to Magick: This is a spell book of standard Battle Magic spells and was stolen from a wizard many decades ago. It contains the spells *Flight*, *Immunity from Poison*, *Magic Bridge* and *Animate Sword*. It is written in the Arcane Language - Magick.

The Book of Black Souls: This spell book is written on the hide of an unknown beast and in ink which seems to continually shift and move as the reader reads the tome. The book was written by a powerful demonist, and a close friend of Carolus, many years ago and contains the spells *Zone of Demonic Protection*, *Stop Demonic Instability*, *Spread Insanity*, *Demonic Portal* and *Summon Greater Demon*. The book is written in the Arcane Language - Demonist.

5) Mundane Library:

Natural wear and tear, as well as several adventuring parties passing through, has damaged or ruined much of what was once an outstanding library. The walls are lined with rotten and broken shelves and books and huge reams of paper are scattered all over the floor in an untidy mess. Many of the pages have rotted or succumbed to mould.

An *Observe* Test, as well as an hour of time spent searching, will allow the party to find some undamaged, or partially damaged, books that may be of interest to them in the future. These are listed below.

The A-Z of Anatomy by Doctor Frank Stienman: This tome covers, in graphic detail, the art of anatomy. It contains knowledge of *Surgery* and *Cure Disease* and can be used to aid study when trying to learn the skill. If referred to at the same time as *Surgery* is being

performed, it adds a +10 bonus to a character's chance of curing wounds.

The Magicians' Art and Use of the Unknown Parts of the Mind by Rupert Ursus: The book covers knowledge of strange arts that can be used by people to read the future, find missing items, or bring other people under their control. It helps with the study of *Hypnotism*, *Diving*, *Dowsing* and *Palmistry*.

The Imperial Intelligence Manual on Secret Societies: This book is a manual for Imperial officers infiltrating guilds and other organisations that use secret languages or signs. Possession of the book is an offence punishable by long-term imprisonment. It can help with learning *Secret Language Guilders* (teamsters, brewers, and masons), *Secret Language Thieves*, *Secret Signs - Thieves' Signs* and *Secret Signs - Woodsman*.

An Abridged History of the Empire by Professor Andreus Fritz: This weighty tome goes into excruciating detail about the history of the Empire, from its formation to a few decades ago. It can help a student learn *History* but is of little use otherwise, except as a doorstep.

6) Laboratory:

The laboratory is where the Liche has spent much of his time since reawakening. Here he plots and schemes, planning the downfall of the Empire and his own ascent to greater power than he has currently known.

The laboratory is L-shaped and contains a wealth of magical paraphernalia; magical circles, trinkets, spell components and the like. Many of the items either stand on shelves or tables. There is no order to them, they just lie where the Liche last placed them. The GM should allow wizards to acquire a reasonable amount of spell components, including some of the rarer ones, but should limit the number to a 2d6 users for the common item and progressively less for rarer items.

The magical ward that is engraved between the three doors is linked to a spell that summons a guardian demon (a gargoyle as detailed previously) if anyone enters the room. When the Liche enters, the summoned beast recognises him and disappears. Unknown intruders are immediately attacked (the demon has been bound to this contract and is fed Orc souls to keep it loyal). However, there is a way out for the adventurers; characters openly displaying the cult symbols found on the cultists in part two of the adventure will not be immediately attacked. Instead, the demon will question them as to their purpose in the laboratory. Hesitation or obviously false answers (the creature is not stupid, but it can be fooled) are attacked without mercy.

The small cages against the left-hand wall contain

goblins to be used in the Liche's experiments. He is attempting to create an intelligent baneguard but without the Anvil his tests are doomed to failure. Still, this doesn't stop him trying. Characters releasing the goblins will have friends for life whether they want them or not and the goblins follow their rescuers around and willingly perform minor tasks (cooking food, carrying bags and the like)

Stood by the fire place is the Liche, Carolus Magister. Consult the section below entitled *Meeting the Liche* for details of this encounter.

7) Summoning Circle:

The marble floor of this chamber is permanently engraved in gold with a demonic summoning circle. The circle roughly seven feet across and is designed to safeguard the summoner, making sure that nothing summoned can escape into the chamber beyond. Any character with *Demon Lore* or with a background that indicates a knowledge of demonologist practises (GM decision on this) recognises the circle for what it is with a successful *Intelligence* Test. The floor inside the circle here has some interesting properties; any blood spilt on it is absorbed, as if the floor was a sponge.

Anyone with *Identify Magical Artifact* or *Magical Sense* who touches the circle can detect that it is still powered, probably meaning that something was summoned recently! In fact the summoned creature is still in the circle, it is just invisible. The Liche summoned the creature as a trap once he knew of the parties approach from his gargoyle servitors outside.

Anyone entering the circle has put their life in severe jeopardy, as the demon will become visible, a split second before it attacks!

8) Dining Hall:

The dining hall is one of the few rooms still in everyday use, although it has not been cleaned up for many years. Dust covers everything and piles of garbage lie in the corners.

The room is pretty bare of features, comprising of two fireplaces, one at each end of the room, and two large wooden tables, with benches on each side. Dirty plates and cutlery rests on the tables, some being used by the room's occupants.

Ten Black Orcs are currently using the room for their meals and are in the process of eating when the players enter. The party has one round to act before the Orcs notice them, draw their weapons and charge them. If the adventurers flee the Orcs follow. The only way to throw the Orcs off the trail is to enter a room with multiple exits and hope the Orcs take a wrong exit or to

fight them (although hit-and-run tactics may be a better answer, that can prove very hard to implement given the layout of the Tower).

Aside from some very suspicious looking food, there is nothing of use or interest in the room. Anyone inspecting the chimney stack discovers a small portal a few yards up through which the smoke disappears. The hole is far too small to fit through. An adventurer in gaseous form can pass through the portal, and finds himself outside of the tower with no obvious way back in except for the front door.

9) Kitchen:

The kitchen area is a complete tip. Piles of rotten food, dirty plates and pots and piles of garbage lie scattered across the room. The Black Orcs, being without servants, are cooking their own food but, being typical members of their race, are loathe to clean up after themselves.

There is no edible food in the kitchen, it being stored in the storeroom (number 15 below). A few bottles of various spices lie around the floor, most without labels and all with open lids.

Anyone stupid enough to eat any of the rotten food will suffer from acute stomach pains for a d4 hours if the fail a *Toughness* Test. Whilst ill, all percentile attributes are reduced by 10 points.

10) Master Bedroom:

The Liche's bedroom has seen little use since he reawakened. Most of his time has been spent in the laboratory and planning his destiny whilst sat on his throne in the Entrance Hall. Of course, being an undead he has no use for sleep anyway.

The room was obviously once lavishly decorated but has fallen into decay over the decades. The canopied double bed still has silk sheets on it, although they are heavily stained. Two sturdy wooden chests, banded with iron, stand beside the main door.

Each chest is locked (lock rating 20) and trapped (a poison needle shoots out and punctures the skin of anyone who fails a *Pick Lock* Test by more than 30%). The poison on the trap is Adder Root and each needle has two doses on it, causing paralysis if the *Poison* Test is failed.

The chests contain piles of gold, silver and jewellery, worth a total of 340GCs and 193 shillings in coin and 507GCs worth of jewellery. At the bottom of the left hand chest is a small potion bottle containing liquid warpstone. Its value depends on who or what the adventurers can find to purchase it.

11) Watchtower:

The watchtower is the highest point of the tower and from here the Orcs have a commanding view of the landscape. Adventurers standing on the watchtower can see for dozens of miles in every direction. Although none of the major towns of the Empire can be seen, several small villages are clearly visible.

To the north the adventurers can see a large Orc encampment, nestled in a valley in the Grey Mountains. Although exact numbers are impossible to guess, there are certainly several hundred Orcs, and maybe up to a thousand. Unless the adventurers try lighting a fire or signalling with a mirror, the Orcs will not see them. Any that look at the tower simply assume that the figures atop the tower are Black Orcs sentries.

12) Servants Quarters:

The servants who once lived here are long dead and the rooms lie empty. Five sets of bunk beds stand against the walls and a large cupboard acted as wardrobe and storage for the servants personal effects. The room contains nothing of value to the adventurers, although they may search for loose change in the rubbish heaps that dot the room.

13) Workshop:

The workshop is the adventurers' final destination, for it was here that the Black Anvil was created and here it must be destroyed. The room is covered in dust but is reasonably tidy otherwise. Several workbenches stand around the room, many with half-finished projects still on them. Anyone willing to spend an hour pottering around can easily collect a good number of tools. For game purposes the adventurer can collect the same quantity and type of tools as detailed under the *Engineer* profession.

Standing to the left of the door is a baneguard. It is covered in dust but is otherwise fully functional. A second baneguard lies on a nearby table. It is also functional, although it will take one round to climb down from the table and assume a combat posture. Both attack once the second adventure has entered the room. The baneguard by the door will attack the second adventure from the rear whilst the first one gets to its feet.

Opposite the door is a forge. The forge is cold and beside it stands a bucket of coal and several bundles of wood. Firing up the forge will take approximately three hours - it has to reach a certain temperature. The method for destroying the forge is detailed below in *Destroying the Black Anvil*.

14) Cells:

This dank and foetid chamber is the Liche's holding pen for those unfortunate souls he intends to sacrifice

to his dark masters. Six cells, each little more than a series of iron bars and containing only a hard, wooden bench and a slop bucket, are situated at the far end of the room.

A round wooden table stands by the door and two Black Orc guards sit around it, playing dice. The Orcs fight to the death if attacked, knowing that there is only one way out of the room and that the adventurers currently stand in front of it.

The keys to the cell doors hang above them on a hook. On the table are the Orcs' two bone dice and around 9 silver shillings in assorted coin. Anyone rolling the dice will soon discover that they have a habit of rolling seven nearly one-third of the time.

There are two possibilities for who is currently resting in the cells at the Liche's expense. If the adventurers have not yet lost a party member, then the cells only contain three innocent peasants, half dead from starvation and of no use to them in their quest. If the adventurers take the peasants with them they will prove more of a burden than a help and will soon be killed by hostiles.

If, on the other hand, the party is depleted, the contents of the cells are replacement characters. The players should build their new characters as normal and then concoct a background story as to how they came to be imprisoned. Unlike the peasants, the new adventurers are quite fit and healthy. Naturally, the existing adventurers may be suspicious of taking on new party members so easily, but they have little choice if they wish to survive to destroy the Black Anvil.

15) Storeroom:

This room is the storeroom for the Orcs' supplies. Crates of dried food, barrels of beer, and carcasses of some sort of animal are stacked against the walls. None of the various containers are labelled in any fashion but it is obvious that the provisions have only been deposited recently.

The supplies are very new, having been placed here only a few weeks back by the Orcs. Most of the supplies are stolen from outlying villages or from merchant wagons that passed through the region.

The room is kept cool, although the adventurers have no way of determining how. In fact, the room is situated far below ground in the core of the pillar upon which the Black Tower stands.

16) Exit Cavern:

This natural cavern is situated some ten miles away from the tower, and exits into the valley in the Grey Mountains where the Orcs are camped. The cavern contains ten

Black Orcs who are on sentry duty, making sure that none of the normal Orcs attempt to enter the tower, rather than stop anyone fleeing from their lord.

The Orcs are pretty bored and are spoiling for a fight. Adventurers who enter the cavern are going to be attacked without hesitation. If the adventurers flee back into the tower, five of the Black Orcs follow, whilst the others fetch reinforcements from the camp. If the adventurers make the mistake of running down the natural passageway they will emerge some 200 yards later in the middle of the Orc camp. Death is the likely result of this little expedition.

There is little of use in the cavern, just a few mounds of rubbish and a small fire, over which a rabbit is being cooked.

THE ADVENTURE

With the knowledge gained from the Alum-O temple the adventurers must now journey to the Grey Mountains to the Tower of Black Portals, where they can destroy the Black Anvil for ever. As with part two of the adventure, the journey to the Tower should not be glossed over, but should in itself be a great adventure taking many weeks or months of game time to play through. A selection of encounters is included below, but Gamesmaster should insert their own as they see fit.

Hi Ho, Hi Ho, It's Off To War We Go: As the party near the town of Dunkelberg they encounter an army on the road, heading towards the Grey Mountains. If they choose to hide, the army passes by in about an hour, otherwise they are spotted by outriders and their presence is reported to the army's commander, Graf Sigmund von Grissenwald.

Graf von Grissenwald, his lieutenants, and a bodyguard of cavalry approach the characters and ask them what they are doing here. They are polite enough, but it is obvious that they do not trust the characters. Any believable answer is enough to pacify them. Suspicious answers or mention of Chaos artifacts results in the adventurers being arrested and interrogated more thoroughly. The interrogation is not covered here, but the adventurers should eventually be allowed to continue on their way after a suitable and painful delay.

Assuming the characters are believed they may ask the Graf what his men are doing. He answers as follows.

"We are from Castle Wittgenstein and are heading for the Grey Mountains. Several villages in the area have been attacked and large numbers of Orcs have recently been sighted gathering near the edge of the mountains. We have been ordered to destroy them. As you can see we are suitably equipped. One company of Imperial

Cavalry, one company of Imperial Infantry, and three companies of mercenaries! Ha! Those Orcs won't know what hit them! If you wish, you may join us. We need all the able bodied men we can get."

If the adventurers refuse for any reason, the Graf snorts once or twice and then tells them that they had best clear the road, for interfering with an Imperial army is an offence against the Emperor. The adventurers may wish to accompany the army for safety or even to fight.

If they with the army travel for safety, the adventurers find that the army is heading for a point some miles south of their destination. The army is heading for the southern tributary of the river and intends to cut across country in a straight line.

The battle that awaits the army is beyond the scope of this adventurer and can be handled as the individual Gamesmaster wishes. If the GM wishes to gloss over the battle, the outcome is as follows.

The Imperial forces meet up with a small force sent from Nuln and manage to rout the Orcs, but are themselves severely mangled in the fight, which is only won when further reinforcements from Nuln arrive. On the way back to Castle Wittgenstein, the army is ambushed and destroyed to a man by a force of Black Orcs and demons summoned by the Liche Carolus Magister.

Old Faces Again: Just before the adventurers enter the Grey Mountains a familiar figure approaches their camp. The druid Gronwyn has tracked them down and wishes to speak to them. After the greetings and formalities are over, the druid speaks to the party.

"Well my friends, your final task lies just ahead now. It will not be easy and I have no doubts that many of you will not return from there alive. Your task is thankless I admit, for very few know that you possess so vile an artifact as the Black Anvil, but those that do know of you have power and your reward is assured."

"To further help you I have a small selection of items that you may find useful. They are limited in power and so do not squander them needlessly. Use them only when you must! When you have finished your task I will contact you again."

The druid will not answer any other questions as he has to leave again to deal with important matter elsewhere in the area.

The items the druid gives them are two *Potions of Healing*, three *Arrows of Potency*, and a single *Potion of Strength*. If the party contains a Wizard, he also hands over an *Energy Jewel* (which he states must be returned to him afterwards). If the party has no magic weapons

of any sort he also hands out two magical swords (which he also wants back). The swords are detailed below.

Both swords have been conditioned by the druid to accept the characters are their temporary owners and to respond to being wielded by them. The first sword, *Stinger*, is a standard magical sword with a +2 damage modifier. The second sword is *Demonbane*, and it contains the powers of granting its holder +1 *Toughness* and also *Instability* (main WHFRP rules, page 189). Both allow the adventurer who uses them to strike creatures only affected by magical weapons.

Individual Gamesmaster should feel free to adjust these items for better or worse based on the strength of the adventurers and also the scarcity of magic items in their campaigns. Note that the druid is not guaranteeing the adventurers success by loading them down in magic, he is just giving them a fighting chance.

After the Anvil has been destroyed, the swords and *Power Jewel* continue to function, but should be handed back to the druid. If the adventurers seek him out and return the items he thanks them and then returns them to the adventurers as a reward for their bravery and honesty. Characters who seek to keep the items (i.e. haven't returned them after six months) have made an enemy of the druid.

The Long Climb: The penultimate challenge the party has to face is the climb to the Black Tower itself. The Tower stands atop a stout pillar of rock which juts forth from the Grey Mountains. The pillar stands almost three hundred feet high and maybe one hundred yards wide, and there appears to be no easy way in. In fact there is an easier way, but it is so well hidden and comes out so much further in the mountains, that the adventurers have no chance of finding it by luck.

In order to make the climb to the Tower, the adventurers need to make four separate climb rolls, each taking them up to a ledge on the pillar and each stage taking roughly two hours to complete. For each stage, have the adventurers make *Dexterity* Risk tests. Due to the treacherous nature of the climb, even characters with *Scale Sheer Surface* must make the Risk test, although they have a +20 bonus to their rolls.

If the roll is failed, the character has merely taken longer than normal due to slow progress (increase the time to three hours). If the roll is a natural double and is over the character's *Dexterity* then he has fallen. The damage taken depends on how high the adventurer was when he fell; either 20, 40, 70, or 90 yards, depending on which stage the character had reached before he fell. Death is a likely result from any height.

Characters tied together by rope may be able to break their fall by having the characters tied next to them a make *Strength* x 10 Test (add both *Strength* attributes together before rolling.) If successful, the falling character is now dangling on the rope and can easily regain his hold. If the roll fails then the character is still suspended but takes a single *Strength* 6 hit as his body is battered against the rock face. On a natural double, which is above their combined *Strength* x 10, the supporting characters have also fallen. And so it may continue (although the next characters only get a *Strength* x 5 Test to support three falling characters.)

The climb itself is not without some incident, and each stage has an encounter tied to it. These are explained below.

A Dead Body: On the first ledge the adventurers reach they discover a dead body. The body has been around so long that it is little more than a skeleton wearing scraps of leather and metal armour. An investigation by a character with *Surgery* reveals that although the body has numerous broken bones from a great fall, the bones also show signs of having been damaged by the claws of a large beast.

A Bag of Gems: As the adventurers reach the next ledge they spy a leather bag further long the rock face. The bag has been split open and its contents, gems and gold coins, can easily be seen. Reaching the bag requires another climbing roll (as detailed above), as does returning to the ledge the adventurer was heading for. The part of the ledge the bag rests upon is too thin to support an adventurer for any length of time.

Inside the bag is an assortment of gems and coins. In total there are 35GCs in coins and seven gems, each worth 2d6 x 10GCs. The bag belonged to the adventurer whose body they encountered lower down the cliff. A character with *Numismatics* can, with a successful *Intelligence* Test, determine that the coins are roughly 80 years old, but are still valid currency in the Empire.

Get A Griffin Yourself Man: Half way up the next stage the characters meet an inhabitant of the cliffs, a griffin! Characters who make an *Observe* roll hear the sound of beating wings getting closer and are allowed a single round of action before the griffin comes diving out of the mist. If the adventurers look up (taking their round of action) they see the griffin approaching.

Next round, regardless of what actions any observant characters took, the griffin attacks. In each round of combat the griffin only attacks with its two *claws*, preferring to use dive bombing techniques rather than 'stand' and fight. Because of this method of attack, it only attacks every other round, taking one round to

manoeuvre for another strike.

Because the adventurers are fighting hanging from a rope, crossbows may be used but normal bows may not. Likewise, character may use one handed weapons, but cannot use two-handed weapons or use a weapon and shield combination as one hand is needed to maintain a hold on the cliff face.

If the griffin is reduced to less than 15 Wounds it flees back to its nest and leaves the adventurers in peace for the rest of the adventure.

The Last Warning: Scant yards below the top of the cliff, a solitary figure is carved into the rock. The image is that of a winged beast with a fanged face and upon it are inscribed the words, "*Death awaits the traveller who continues past me*" in Old Worlder. The image itself present no threat to the party, although they may suspect otherwise, and the words refer to the dangers that lie ahead in the Tower.

Outside the Tower of Black Portals: Following the climb, the adventurers now stand atop the pillar, outside of the Tower which they must enter. The Tower stands roughly eighty feet high and is pitch black in colour. Small window slits can be seen at various points up the outer walls, but none are large enough for an adventurer to enter, not even for a Halfling! In fact, the arrow slits are false, and do not lead to the interior of the Tower.

The doorway to the Tower is easily found, being an archway flanked by two statues of glaring winged demons. The doorway is a black void (as detailed above) which seems to ripple slightly, as if its surface was made of water. Entering the doorway is easy enough, but is not without risks. Once half of the party has entered the door the guardian statues, actually gargoyles, animate and bar entrance to the others. They then proceed to attack the party members outside of the Tower. The gargoyles are also in telepathic link with the Liche inside the Tower and he will know of the adventurers arrival.

Remember that those inside the Tower have no way of knowing what is happening outside; the doors do not let sound or light penetrate the interior.

INSIDE THE TOWER

Once the adventurers are inside the Tower the adventure begins in earnest. The Liche knows of their arrival through his gargoyle servants and he can also sense the Black Anvil, which he created so long ago. The odds are definitely stacked against the adventurers and they will need to draw upon all of the resources and experience to survive.

Wandering Monsters:

Although not exactly wandering monsters in the 'traditional' sense of the word, the Liche does not leave the security of his home to chance. Since he learned of the adventurers arrival he has summoned a detachment of Black Orcs to hunt through the Tower and find them. The Orcs will take an hour to reach the tower as they are elsewhere in the mountains at the moment on other duties.

Once the Orcs enter the tower, they begin in room 16, The Cavern, and proceed from there. They spend ten minutes in each room (arguing and looting small items) before moving on. The Orcs know that the doors do not work properly and whenever there is a choice of exits roll a dice appropriate to the number of doors and have them leave according (e.g. in a room with 3 doors roll a d6; on a 1 or 2 they leave through the door by which they entered, 3 or 4 they leave through the next nearest door, and on a 5 or 6 they leave through the remaining door).

Note that the Tower of Black Portals is dangerous already. If the adventurers are having a rough time then the Orc patrol will never find them; otherwise be completely arbitrary. Do not lead the Orcs towards the adventurers just because you want combat to occur, let the dice and chaos do its work.

Meeting the Liche:

The demonologist Liche, Carolus Magister, can be found in the laboratory, where he is waiting for the adventurers. Unless he hears the reverberations of the Black Anvil being struck, he remains in the laboratory, knowing that sooner or later they will come looking for him and meanwhile he plots their punishment. He can track their progress through the Tower because he can sense the presence of the Anvil, which is spiritually connected to him.

If the Anvil remains stationary for longer than an hour, he immediately rushes to the location himself, determined to steal it back.

What if the Liche Retrieves the Anvil?:

There is a possibility that Carolus Magister can regain possession of the Anvil, most likely through brute force. If he does then the adventurers have a serious problem, as the Liche is not going to leave it lying around for them to simply retrieve.

If Carolus gains the Anvil, he takes it to the laboratory for safety. Once there, he summons three guardians to protect it and a fourth to send word to the Orcs in the camp that their presence is required. Although it takes the Orcs an hour to arrive, they number thirty and present a serious problem for the adventurers. Ten of the Orcs

rush to the laboratory to help guard the Anvil, and the rest break into two groups of ten and search the Tower for the adventurers.

Destroying the Black Anvil:

Once the forge in the workshop is up to temperature, the Black Anvil can be placed in it. After two hours of being thoroughly heated, the Anvil is ready for the next stage. The Anvil must be pulled out and struck with a blunt instrument five times in a slow, steady rhythm. Each strike must be exactly two minutes apart. On each blow a deep, booming, and yet strangely hollow voice cries out for the adventurer to stop. The voice is extremely domineering and the character must pass a *Willpower* roll (with a cumulative -10 penalty per strike) to be able to carry on his task. If he fails he drops the hammer (or other instrument), refusing to take part in the Anvil's destruction. Only after an hour of being away from the Anvil can the character try to strike the Anvil again.

On the fifth and final stroke, there is an almighty crack and the very walls of the Tower shudder. A thick, black mist flows from the Anvil and begins to coalesce by the doorway. One round later, it forms into the shape of a fierce demon (see below).

If the Liche has not yet been destroyed, he enters the room on the second stroke, flanked by two of his guardians. While the guardians attack the other characters, the Liche goes straight for the character smashing the Anvil.

The Demon Released:

The demon released from the Anvil resembles a bat-winged goat with cadaverous features and large black horns. It has been imprisoned in the Anvil for centuries and is, understandably, pretty miffed. Although the adventurers have released it, it is out for blood - any blood it can get. It takes a few moments to gloat, as is a demons want, and then lunges at them, going for the kill. Luckily (!) for the adventurers it is rather weak after being imprisoned.

"Bow before me puny mortals! I am Maalatherax, the creator and the corrupter! Long centuries have I been imprisoned! Long centuries away from my home, my brood and my food! Now I will eat and sate my appetite for souls!"

The demon will not surrender, give mercy or show any pity. It only seeks to kill the adventurers, feast on their flesh and then return to Hell. When the demon is finally destroyed there is a loud thunderclap, that reverberates throughout the room, stunning everyone present for one round unless the succeed in a *Toughness* Test.

The End Of The Tower:

Once the Liche, the Black Anvil *and* the demon inhabiting it have been destroyed, the magic holding the Tower of Black Portals together begins to weaken.

The whole shakes suddenly, like a great beast in a death throw. All dies down for a few moments but then the Tower begins to shake continually, gently at first, but becoming harder as time passes. After *ten minutes* the Tower disintegrates, returning to the realm of Hell where it was created, never to be seen again on the surface of the Old World. Anyone caught in the Tower when this happens has *no* chance of survival (regardless of Fate point expenditure).

Any of the items created by the Liche that are removed from the Tower cease to be magical (these items are noted in the text above and in the Appendix), although they still hold a demonic taint. The grimoires in the library retain their spell knowledge however.

EPILOGUE

With the Black Anvil destroyed, the Liche banished from the material plane forever, and the Tower of Black Portals returned to Hell, the adventurers' long quest is over. The Orcs under the control of the Liche soon learn of his demise and, without a strong leader, retreat back to their native lands. The threat to the Empire is over, although another one is likely to be forming somewhere.

Aside from Gronwyn and his druidic allies, no other citizens of the Empire know what the adventurers have done on their behalf. Trying to convince others that the Anvil and Tower really existed is next to impossible, although the story may well become a masterpiece if told well and often enough.

As for rewards, there are very few. The druid allows them to keep the magic items, if they first return them to him, but there is no monetary reward or the handing out of noble titles. The adventurers can expect to have made friends for life with the druids though, and once they are known to an individual druid, he goes out of his way to help them as best he can. Training, shelter and support are typical rewards available from the druids.

There is one major penalty for completing the task though - the Lords of Chaos know of the adventurers and are angry that one of their major pawns has been destroyed. Of course, others will take Carolus' place, but not for many, many years. Until then, the powers of darkness wait, brooding on their defeat and plotting the adventurers' demise.

What if the Adventurers Lose?:

It is conceivable that the adventurers will all meet their

deaths in the Tower. If this happens, the Liche continues with his master plan to dominate the Empire. He rebuilds and fortifies the Tower, and then starts producing baneguards by the dozen.

Although this is a dark ending, it presents a nice opening for a new campaign, where stopping the Liche's army becomes the adventurers main goal.

EXPERIENCE

Once the adventurers have destroyed the Black Anvil, the Liche and the guardian daemon, the saga is over and experience can be handed out. Sample experience rewards are given below but individual GMs may adjust the figures as they see fit.

GMs should assign smaller awards for each of the encounters along the way. Remember, this is a long journey and the adventurers will need to be quite tough by the time they reach the Alum-O.

Good role-playing on the journey to the Tower: 10 - 30 for each major encounter or event

Good role-playing throughout the main adventure: 30 - 50 each

Destroying the Black Anvil: 40 points

Destroying the daemon inhabiting the Anvil: 50 points

Destroying the Liche: 40 points

For a character surviving all three parts of the saga: 150 points and 1 Fate point

BESTIARY & TREASURES

Monsters:

Black Orcs, commanders of the hoard

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	43	25	4	4	7	30	1	18	29	18	29	29	14

Black orcs are *subject to animosity* with an extra 10% penalty towards members of other goblinoid races. They have Night Vision with a range of 10 yards. The Black Orcs act as commanders for the liche's orc forces.

Normal Orcs, 'loyal' minions

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	33	25	3	4	7	20	1	29	29	18	29	29	18

Orcs are *subject to animosity* towards goblinoids of other tribes or races than their own. Orcs have Night Vision extending up to 10 yards.

Griffin

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
6	50	0	5	5	35	80	4	n/a	66	14	66	66	n/a

In combat a griffin attacks with one *bite*, two *claws* to the front and one *kick/stomp* to the rear. Griffins cause *fear* in all living creatures under 10 feet tall. They fly as *swoopers* and the Move score below is for ground movement.

Gargoyles, demonic servitors

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	50	42	4	3	5	60	2	89	89	89	89	89	14

The gargoyles are lesser demons, and cause *fear* in all living creatures under 10 feet tall. They are immune to psychological effects and cannot be forced to leave combat. They fly as *swoopers* and the M score given below is for ground movement. They are affected by normal weapons and their attacks are normal, non-magical attacks. They are *subject to instability* if they travel further than 10 yards from the Tower, which is so infused with demonic power that it acts as a controller for them.

The Anvil's Demon, a Greater Demon

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
6	70	70	7	7	40	10	8	89	89	89	89	89	89

Greater Demons cause *fear* in all living creatures and *terror* in living creatures under 10 feet tall. It is *subject to instability* if they travel further than 10 yards from the Tower, which is so infused with demonic power that it acts as a controller. Greater Demons are also *magical* and can only be damaged by spells or magical weapons.

Non-Player Characters:

Carolus Magister, Demonologist & Liche

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Dex	Ld	Int	Cl	WP	Fel
4	41	25	4	5*	23	60	4	43	89	89	89	89	n/a

* Although demonologists lose *Toughness* for summoning demons, Carolus knows several ancient and bloody rites to restore his health. They involve, needless to say, the sacrifice of sentient creatures.

Skills:

Arcane Language - Demonology, Arcane Language - Elvish, Arcane Language - Magick, Cast Spells - Battle Magic 1-4, Cast Spells - Demonic Battle Magic, Cast Spells - Petty Magic, Demon Lore, Identify Magic Artifact, Identify Undead, Magical Awareness, Magic Sense, Manufacture Potions, Manufacture Scrolls, Prepare Poison, Read/Write, Rune Lore, Scroll Lore, Secret Language - Classical

Spells

Magic Points (53 + 10)

Carolus is a powerful creature and has expended hundreds of mortal lives in payment for learning more from his dark masters. His power could destroy an adventuring party quite easily. Carolus is not just a monster to be destroyed, he is a cunning and devious opponent who knows how to use his powers to the best of his powers. Wanton destruction is not his style, he prefers to inflict suffering and torment on his foes.

Magic Alarm (2), Aura of Resistance (2), Strength of Combat (1), Lightning Bolt (2), Cause Cowardly Flight (6), Dispel Aura (4), Change Allegiance (8), Cure Severe Wounds (10), Bind Demon (3), Summon Guardian (3), Summon Energy (3), Spread Insanity (8), Summon Great Power (6), Summon Greater Demon (25), Summon Total Power (40)

Powers:

Liches cause *Fear* and *Terror* in living creatures; they themselves are immune to psychological effects. Liches have glowing red eyes which can *transfix* an opponent. The victim must make a successful Hypnotism roll or be transfixed. This is a magical attack and may be augmented by magic points. Since Carolus is not a necromancer (his undead status is special) he cannot control undead. A fuller description of these powers can be found on pages 249-250 of the WHFRP rulebook.

Magic Items

Being a powerful demonist, Carolus has several magical items which he carries and wields. These are described below.

Blackwand (*Apocrypha Now*, page 46) - the wand has only 20 *Arrows of Weakness* left in it, but is otherwise exactly the same as per the description in the book.

Amulet of Thrice-Blessed Copper (WHFRP rule book, page 183). The amulet is tied around his neck by a silver chain.

Energy Jewel (WHFRP rule book, page 185) - the jewel stores 10 magic points and is part of a ring on his right hand.

History

Carolus Magister, born Carolus Steppenwulf, was born in Marienburg in the year 900 to wealthy parents, both of whom were senior guild members. He had everything a young man could want; money, influence, young girls and a good education. And yet he was not happy.

When he turned 16 he left the Marienburg University and took up as an apprentice with a local wizard. Why? Carolus wanted more money and power, not his parents but his own. And what better way than to become a mighty wizard. Years passed and Carolus learned well, but he also became more corrupted. Twenty years later he was a master wizard but he had also started along a darker road.

On a dark winter's night Carolus took refuge in a peasant hut whilst travelling to Altdorf for a meeting with the city's officials. There he discovered that the peasants who owned the hut were servants of Dark Powers. Intrigued, and also afraid, he questioned them about their arts and they told him that since joining the cult they had acquired real power. Carolus left the hut the following day, a happy man - he had a book of dark rituals under his arm and two souls already sacrificed to his new masters.

Carolus never made it to Altdorf for the meeting. Instead he sealed himself away from humanity and began to study, harder than he ever had before. Another fifteen years had passed before Carolus emerged to face the world once more. But he was not the same man he was. Bent by the Dark Powers and mad beyond hope he made several powerful pacts, one of which resulted in the creation of the Tower of Black Portals and the death of over one hundred innocents.

Ensnared in his tower he set out putting his darkest plan into effect, to dominate the Empire with an unbeatable army. The result of his experiment was the Black Anvil and the baneguards. Five years further down the road Carolus was an old man, diseased and crippled by old age, and still his plan was not complete. In a desperate bid he made another pact - endless life in return for continuing loyalty and a constant supply of fresh sentient souls. Realising that Carolus was more use to them in the living world, the Dark Powers agreed.

Carolus has met many 'deaths,' coming back each time

after a brief sojourn in limbo, but his last death rendered him bodiless for several decades, during which time his tower was ransacked and the Black Anvil stolen by Baron Ennum von Regensdorf. Since re-awakening barely five years ago Carolus has been slowly rebuilding his strength and power, and is determined to retrieve his Anvil and put his plan to dominate the Empire back into action.

Personality

What can one say about a man who tried to destroy the Empire and has made so many bargains with demons that he is still in debt to the Dark Powers after four centuries? The liche is completely insane; there is no spark of normalcy in his mind and he will take any steps to retrieve his anvil - *any steps*.

Equipment:

Wizard's staff, sword

Magic Items:

Throne of the Inhospitable Host

The throne is carved from a single block of white marble and rests atop the dais. It weighs several tons and cannot be transported without some powerful magic or a large labour force. The top surface of the left hand armrest of the throne contains a small panel which can be slid back. An *Observe* Test with a -10% is required to find the panel.

Underneath the panel are six golden buttons, none of which are labelled. Each button has a particular spell effect triggered by it. These are listed below and have exactly the same effects as the spells in the WHFRP rule book..

1. *Fireball* (1 per ball)
2. *Lightning Bolt* (2 per bolt)
3. *Stand Still* (12)
4. *Cause Stupidity* (5)
5. *Blast* (10)
6. *Aura of Protection* (3) [*the spell affects everything on the dais*]

The throne contains 36 magic points and it recovers them at the rate of 3 per hour. A quicker way is to spill blood onto the throne; one Wound's worth of a sentient creature's blood regenerates 2 magic points. The reason for this is simple - a demon has been bound into the throne and it is its magic that is being used.

The spells contained in the throne are always activated correctly, regardless of the spell points remaining in it. If the person pressing the button does not verbally nominate a target, the spell aims for the nearest person in front of the throne, whether they are on the dais or the main floor area.