

Order and Destruction: A Field Guide to the Old World

A diagnostic of the powers fighting over a dying fantasy world—and the hatreds that guarantee their ruin.



Annotated from the Archives of Karaz-a-Karak.

The tragedy of the world is recorded in blood.

**BROKEN OATHS TO THE KARAZ ANKOR
- A THOUSAND YEARS OF SHAME.**

Kept in the mountain hall of Karaz-a-Karak for over 4,000 years, this ledger records every slight, theft, and broken promise committed against the Dwarf race.

No entry is ever forgotten. No grudge is closed without proportionate vengeance.

The world of Warhammer Fantasy is not dying because its enemies are too strong. It is dying because the defenders of civilization are nursing thousand-year grudges and occasionally going to war over a shaved beard. They have the piecent pieces to survive. They refuse to put them on the same side of the board.

A fractured ecosystem of survival.



The Forces of Order theoretically share the same goal: survival. But their ideological and geographic isolation renders unified strategy impossible.

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Brettonnia: The brutal cost of the chivalric fairy tale.



The Myth: Founded by Gilles le Breton, blessed by the mysterious Lady of the Lake. Knights swear to a Code of Chivalry and quest for the Grail. They represent the deadliest heavy cavalry in the world.



The Reality: A brutal feudal hierarchy. A tiny aristocracy lives in storybook glory, entirely supported by a vast population of downtrodden serfs who do all the dying and none of the questing.

The Two Humanities: A divergence in survival doctrine.

	Empire of Man	Brettonia
Military Doctrine	Gunpowder, halberds, mechanical pragmatism.	Elite heavy cavalry, holy relics, massed peasant archery.
Societal Structure	Quarrelsome confederation of Elector Counts.	Rigid, oppressive feudal serfdom.
Foundational Myth	Sigmar, the mortal man who became a state god.	The Lady of the Lake, a mystical goddess granting boons.

The Dwarfs (Dawi):

Managing an apocalypse through stubbornness.

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The Time of Woes:

Ancient master-crafters whose civilization peaked millennia ago.

Their underground karaks are being lost one by one to earthquakes and subterranean horrors in a painfully slow catastrophe.

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The Slayers: Warriors so shamed by failure they renounce all possessions, dye their hair into great orange crests, and seek out monsters large enough to grant them an honorable death.

No faction is quite so committed to dying well.



Kislev: The northern shield of blood.



- ⦿ **The Buffer State:** A cold kingdom of Winged Lancers and Ice Witches, ruled by a Tzar or Tzarina.
- ⦿ **Geographic Curse:** Kislev matters out of all proportion to its size because it sits directly in the path of Chaos marching south. It bleeds simply so the Empire has time to muster its armies.

The Lizardmen: Biological machinery serving a forgotten blueprint.

The Great Plan: The oldest living faction, cold-blooded servants of the long-vanished alien architects known as the Old Ones.

They defend the world only to correct history back to this cosmic blueprint.

Slann:

Immense, psychic toad-priests who read the Great Plan in meditative trances.

Saurus:

Warrior-bred infantry.

Skinks:

Clever, agile administrators and skirmishers.

Kroxigor:

Hulking, brute-force laborers and shock troops.

The High Elves (Asur) and the physics of the Great Vortex.

The Mechanics of the Vortex:

At the center of the ring-shaped continent of Ulthuan spins a magical maelstrom maintained by Elven mages. It acts as a continuous drain, siphoning raw Chaos energy out of reality. Without it, the world would have drowned millennia ago.

The Burden of Ulthuan:

The High Elves are beautiful, arrogant, and entirely exhausted from holding a line nobody thanks them for.



The Elven Schism: One race, three incompatible philosophies.

High Elves (Asur)	Dark Elves (Druchii)	Wood Elves (Asrai)
Ulthuan, the island ring.	Naggaroth, the freezing northern continent.	Athel Loren, the sentient, violent forest.
Duty and magical containment.	Slavery, piracy, and the worship of Khaine, god of murder.	Total isolationism; will commit startling violence to keep outsiders out.
The Phoenix King.	The Witch King Malekith & Morathi.	Orion, who burns to death and is reborn annually, & Queen Ariel.

The War of the Beard: A masterclass in catastrophic pride.

Step 1: The Inciting Incident - Dark Elf raiders in disguise poison the ancient High Elf/Dwarf alliance. A Dwarf trade delegation is insulted by Elves.

Step 2: The Unforgivable Mutilation - The Dwarf ambassador's beard is shaved—the ultimate mutilation in Dwarf culture.

Step 3: The War of Vengeance - The war burns for centuries, crippling the two most advanced civilizations in the early world.

Step 4: The Fatal Climax - Dwarf High King Gotrek Starbreaker kills Phoenix King Caledor II in single combat (avenging his own son) and seizes his crown.

Synthesis: The trust is permanently shattered. This single grudge is why the line against Chaos cannot hold today.

The Sundering: An heir's tantrum metastasizes into a civilization.

The Bloodline Doomed: The first king, Aenarion, draws the cursed Sword of Khaine to defeat Chaos, dooming his bloodline.



The Rejected Heir: Malekith, Aenarion's greatest son, expects the throne. The ruling Council passes him over.



The Trial by Fire: To prove his right, Malekith steps into the sacred Flame of Asuryan. It rejects and horrifically burns him.



The Cataclysm: Humiliated, Malekith turns on his people. His war backfires, sinking much of Ulthuan.



Exile: He flees to Naggaroth, becoming the Witch King. Every Dark Elf raid for the next 2,500 years stems from this single denied throne.



The Metaphysics of Chaos and the Great Game.

Core Concept: Chaos pours through collapsed poles, answering to four gods locked in an eternal contest. Their armies include warp-spawned Daemons, mutated Beastmen of the deep woods, and savage human Warriors of Chaos from the frozen north.

Khorne: Lord of blood, rage, and martial honor.

Slaanesh: The youngest god of excess, born from Elven decadence and forever hungry for Elven souls.

Tzeentch: The master schemer of change, manipulation, and sorcery.

Nurgle: The paradoxical god of disease, who genuinely loves his followers as he rots them.



The Skaven: The worldwide cover-up of the Under-Empire.



DENIED



The Surface (The Official Imperial Truth):
The Empire officially denies that Skaven exist. Sightings of ratmen are dismissed as peasant superstition.



The Underground (The Reality):
A teeming civilization of untold millions wielding insane technology powered by Warpstone (solidified Chaos).

- The Council of Thirteen:
- They are kept from conquering the surface only by their relentless betrayals.
- The four Great Clans constantly knife each other:
 - Skryre (Mad warlock-engineers)
 - Moulder (Monster-breeders)
 - Pestilens (Plague-monks)
 - Eshin (Assassins)

The Greenskins: The biology of exponential violence.

Fungal Reproduction: Orcs and Goblins reproduce via spores. Extermination is impossible; killing an Orc simply fertilizes the next batch of warriors.

The Twin Gods: They exist solely to fight, worshipping Gork (brutally cunning) and Mork (cunningly brutal).

Psychic Bloodlust

Population Density

The Waaagh! Curve: When enough Greenskins gather, their collective bloodlust generates a literal psychic feedback loop. This phenomenon empowers their shamans and triggers a massive, unstoppable migration of pure violence.

The Undead: A genealogy of death.

The Source Code: Nagash

A desert priest-king who invented necromancy and created the first vampires by refining an Elixir of Life from warpstone.

Branch 1: The Tomb Kings

A botched ritual woke the mummified rulers of Nehekhara, not as mindless zombies, but as furious, self-aware dynasts. Led by Settra the Imperishable, who rejected Nagash with the phrase: "Settra does not serve. Settra rules."

Branch 2: The Vampires

Descended from Nagash's first creations into five bloodlines. Includes the ambitious von Carsteins, whose patriarch Vlad nearly conquered the Empire from Sylvania.

The Outcasts & Mercenaries.



The Ogres

Massive, mercenary giants roaming the east. They worship a meteor that literally took a bite out of their homeland, and they hire out their bottomless appetites to anyone who can pay them in food.



The Chaos Dwarfs

A dark, terrifying inversion of their western cousins. Dwarfs cut off in the east who were corrupted by Chaos into an industrial, slaving empire that worships a brazen bull-god.

The Arithmetic of Survival.



The Synthesis: Lay the board out, and the arithmetic is survivable. If these powers ever genuinely combined, Chaos and the hordes of Destruction might actually lose.

The Grudge Multiplier.

- The Dwarfs will never forgive the Elves for the War of the Beard.

- The High and Dark Elves will fight until one bloodline is extinct.

- The Empire and Bretonnia squabble over borders and pride.

- The Wood Elves will not leave their trees.

- The Lizardmen serve a plan no human can read.



The Conclusion: Order is not losing a war of attrition. They are losing because every faction maintains a grudge-book of its own. Every grudge is one more reason the door stays unguarded.

The engine of pride and ruin.



Warhammer Fantasy is not a story of good versus evil. It is the story of a civilization too wounded and too proud to unite, fighting an enemy that needs only one moment of disunity to win.

This exact same machinery of pride and ruin will eventually trigger the End Times. And millions of years later, in the 41st Millennium, the same tragedy will repeat among the stars—just with more lasers and fewer beards. The book is never, ever finished.