

The Howling Man

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Based on the Twilight Zone episode of the same name.

Author's Note: The success of how this scenario plays out depends greatly on how the main characters (Brother Jerome and John) are played, therefore it is suggested that the GM be very familiar with the scenario to be able to anticipate the PC's questions and play the NPCs to their fullest. Watching the Twilight Zone episode "The Howling Man" this scenario is based on is also highly recommended. I am forever grateful to Braddoc, Elttaes, Maelwys, Alexi, and KnightOfTheLady for their invaluable help in writing this.

Location: This scenario can take place anywhere in the Empire, but should be placed far out in the middle of nowhere where it is extremely isolated. Ideally, it should be in a place where the PCs are passing through and need to stop.

Early in the day or the day prior, the PCs will encounter a group of monks (Numbering about 5 or 6) riding in a large wagon. Wearing plain robes, they bear none of the usual trappings of monks, any insignia of their order or deity, or even any weapons visible. They will stop if the PCs address them, but otherwise will not notice the PCs until they have been practically run off the road. The monks will not speak, even when spoken to and a hard (-20%) Perception test will reveal that they all seem nervous.

The monk's leader, Brother Jerome, who will briefly question the PCs about what they are doing on the road, trying to see if they are lying. As he does so, his manner is condescending and short. If they answer truthfully, he will be more talkative. His order is the Priory of Black Fire Wall (**GM Note: Feel free to change the name, it should be unusual and out of place**) of which none of the PCs have ever heard of this order before, a hard (-20%) Lore(Religion) test will reveal that the name doesn't quite make sense. Brother Jerome will not give any indications as to his order's purpose except "to follow their vision from holy Sigmar". Assuming the PCs have at least been non-hostile, Brother Jerome will warn them to stay true to the goodness in them and avoid the village of Carrinn just up ahead, as evil resides there (**Or anything else you need to strenuously warn them about the village**). He will then declare that his business is urgent and he must attend to it and drive off.

A short while later, the PCs will be run off the road again by the same cart bearing the same monks and a large squirming bundle in the back of the cart. They are driving at a breakneck pace, utterly uncaring about who or what they might run down or run into. They absolutely will not stop for anything. **GM Note: Ideally, given the time that has passed between meetings, the PCs should know or guess that the monks couldn't have gone anywhere except more wilderness.**

As the day wears on, the PCs will come across an abandoned village just before nightfall and a cold spring rain has just started falling. The village will not appear on any map, and the PCs are surprised to see it there. If any of them want to attempt a Lore(Region) test, they have never heard of a village here. Intrepid PCs may try and do a search around the sides of the road, they will find a very old and faded sign that says “Carrinn” buried in the underbrush, it clearly has been quite some time since it fell.

As they enter the town, the smaller houses are only barely standing, already mostly reclaimed by nature. Carrinn is completely silent, no insects, birds, or animals are heard except for the pit-pat of rain drops. But some of the larger houses towards the center of town are still standing and will offer sufficient shelter from the rain. One such building is the former tavern, The Laughing Dwarf. The stairs to the second floor have collapsed, but the common room is still mostly dry and the fireplace/hearth is still sound. What tables and chairs remain are strewn around the room in various states of brokenness.

The Laughing Dwarf is meant to be an eerie and forlorn place. Any casks in the tavern are empty and there is no food anywhere to be found. Roll as many times as you wish on the table below if you want to add some flavor to the scene or use your own ideas.

- The wall opposite the great hearth stays shrouded in shadows until a light source is brought very near. When it is explored, there is a painting hanging on the wall of a man's face. The painting and the frame are in surprisingly good condition. The background of the painting will shift several times when different people look at it.
- There is one table still upright in the common room with a broken candle holder on it (but no candle). There is a clean, battered tin plate and spoon on the table along with a mouldy loaf of bread nearby.
- A cloak is hung up over a broken chair near the fireplace. It's edge is unraveled and it's color has been faded by the sun.
- If the PCs explore the Inn a bit more, they will find a small humanoid skeleton curled up in a corner of the store room. It appears to have died peacefully and the bones have been bleached by the sun despite the fact that the room is not open to the outside.
- At the top of the landing on the second floor (if the PCs are stubborn enough to get up there) the PCs will find an adult sized humanoid skeleton, this one is wearing mail armor and is holding a dagger defensively. The leg bones of this skeleton have been removed and are arranged in a geometric pattern nearby.
- A spider web shaped into an eye. The spider in the web will act as a pupil of the eye and will make the eye appear to follow the nearest PC who isn't looking at it.
- The shadows on the wall will be on a 5 second delay of what they should be. If any of the PCs wake up in the night, allow a Perception test and/or an Intelligence test to notice that the shadows are moving as if to stab a PC, but nothing is there to be causing the shadows.
- There's a skull sitting somewhere, also bleached by the sun. Despite nobody touching it, it will always be turned to follow one of the PCs (chosen at random). If it is thrown to the ground, it will land upright and stare at whoever disturbed it.

That night, Morrslieb rises as a thin crescent but those who stare at it for long enough will notice that it is visibly waxing. Allow whoever is on watch to make periodic checks to notice that any horses the party might have are spooked. Around 2am, the party is awakened by a series of inhuman shrieks. They are constant, with only a few heartbeats to pass after one ends and the next one begins. If the party were listening to a recording of a soul trapped in hell it could be no more anguished. If any PCs bother to look outside, they can just a long shadow on the ground across the street.

Assuming the PCs go out to investigate, the shadow resolves itself into a dead beastman (vulture headed) and Brother Jerome. From the appearance of the bodies, Brother Jerome was coming towards the PCs and was stabbed in the back by the beastman which he then killed with the club he has in his hand. As the PCs are investigating, Brother Jerome coughs a bit and says, "I warned you against coming here, but perhaps Sigmar knew better than I. Unfortunately, the evil that followed you here has done me in, so it falls to you to keep the Empire safe. Just across the bridge, you will find our monastery, inside lies a precious treasure. The very future of the Empire! It must be kept...." With that, Brother Jerome is overcome by his wounds and dies. If the party inspects Brother Jerome's body any further, they will find his body heavily mutated (**How it is mutated is up to the GM, but it should be something that would allow Jerome to pass for human**).

The bridge indicated by Jerome was easily visible when the PCs rode into Carrinn, and they should have no trouble locating it now even in the moonlight. The building Jerome pointed out is behind some ruined houses, though the door has been thrown off its hinges. As the party draws closer, they will see a group of Beastmen and Mutants just outside. They are discussing how they need to withdraw and regroup before they make a second attempt. **The Beastmen are the invaders and the monks (slaughtered inside) are the defenders, but it should be played up that the Mutants are more monks, mutated like Jerome was working with the Beastmen. If a fight follows, it should be tough, but the Beastmen are wounded, they are also desperate. I used 1 Gor per PC, +2 Ungors, +1 Tzaangor/Brayherd Shaman.** Inside the monastery is a scene of carnage, there are dead beastmen and dead monks all over the place, about a dozen of each. There is one large hall, a small dormitory, and a study of sorts where Jerome had his room. Off the back corner of the hall is a small hallway leading to a single cell, which contains a single man. Dressed in rags, with wild unkempt hair, is John.

John T. Z. Eentch, will be desperate and manic when he hears footsteps outside. He will beg for help, calling on any shred of humanity the PCs may have in them. He will tell a wild tale of how Jerome found him wanting to change the state of the roads in Burgenhof (**Or some other nearby larger village**) and *clearly* that means that John is the Lord of Change himself. A brief inspection will reveal that every brick in John's cell has a two-tailed comet engraved on it, as does every bar in the window (which are very widely spaced), and every plank in the door. The door itself isn't even locked, it just has a simple wooden latch (shaped like a comet) that prevents the door from accidentally swinging open. Intelligent PCs will ask why John hasn't just gotten out of the prison cell, but he will blame Jerome's maltreatment and abuse and evade

the answer. If the PC's get too close to the cell door, then John's mania will only increase and he will rush the door and clutch at their clothes and beg for his freedom.

If the PCs explore the monastery a bit more, John will continue to implore them for their help, invoking the name of Sigmar, Ulric, Shallaya, and anyone or anything else he can think of. He will promise what wealth he has "back at his humble merchant shop" merely to breathe free and see his family again after 3 long years of imprisonment. The PCs will also easily find Brother Jerome's study in the monastery. Inside are 2 dead beastmen, evidently Brother Jerome gave as good as he got. Brother Jerome's diary outlines the vision he received from Sigmar, where Sigmar showed him the means to overcome the Ruinous Powers and how to find Tzeentch, the Lord of Change (If Jerome would go to a certain spot on a certain day, wearing a hat of a certain color and throw a vegetable in the air, then the person that vegetable would land on would be Tzeentch, or something equally inane). The rest of the diary reveals how he was ostracised from his first monastery for such insane ideas, so Jerome left to start his own order. The last entry, dated 3 years ago, details how Jerome received his mutation while capturing Tzeentch which he had to keep hidden to prevent a mutiny among the other monks there (**Make up other entries as desired or needed**). The other pages are filled with repeated drawings of the words "Purity of Essence" and "Peace on Earth" (**Yes, blatantly taken from the movie Dr. Strangelove. That scene (between Mandrake and Ripper) should help serve as a guide for how to run this scene as the PCs read the journal**). When the PCs are done exploring the office, they should be convinced that Brother Jerome was only saved from a Shallayan Sanitorium because none of the other monks here were brave enough to stand up to him and because the Sigmarite church did not wish to deal with the scandal and inevitable questions.

IF THE CELL DOOR IS OPENED, EVEN FOR A MOMENT, EVEN JUST A CRACK, JOHN WILL SEIZE HIS CHANCE AND TRANSFORM INTO A TWO HEADED RAVEN AND FLY OUT INTO THE NIGHT AS A NAMELESS DREAD PARALYZES THE PCs. LEAVING THE MONASTERY HE WILL NOT LEAVE ANY FOOTPRINTS, JUST A DISTANT ECHOING LAUGHTER. SHOULD THE PCs RUN OUT INTO THE NIGHT, A HARSH RASPY WHISPER WILL COME FROM THE AIR AROUND THEM, "GROVELERS, YOU HAVE MY THANKS."

Ultimately, whether or not John's real name is Tzeentch The Lord of Change or John Tomas Zwingli-Eich is up for you to decide. The purpose of this interlude is to highlight how wide and wonderful and strange the Warhammer World is. I hope you are able to have as much fun with it as I did in writing it!