



## "The Undying Girl" Eine Warhammer Fantasy Kurzgeschichte auf Englisch

Hallo! Ich schreibe schon seit einiger Zeit an meinen Eigenen Kurzgeschichten herum, und da ich ein großer Fan von Warhammer bin ist irgendwann "Lillian" entstanden.  
Das ist ihre Ursprungsgeschichte.

Ich hoffe auf Feedback und wenn ihr Ideen habt wie ich mein Werk verbessern könnte höre ich sie immer gerne!

Außerdem bin ich neu hier, dass heißt ich bin mir nicht 100% sicher ob ich richtig gepostet habe. Ist Prosa das richtige Forum? Gibt es Foren für Englisch-sprachige Texte? Gibt es ein Warhammer Forum?

Also dann, viel Spaß und genießen mit dem "Undying Girl"!

.....

### **The Undying Girl**

The Man sat silently in the Opposite side of the Carriage. It was our their third Day on the Road already and he had yet to utter more than half a sentence at a time. All he did was silently doze, always keeping a wary eye on me, and clutch the Package on his Lap of Course. He had likely been sent with me to guard the Package, under the Pretense to ward me against the Troubles on the Road, and to make sure that my Long-lost Virginity lasted through the Journey of course.

His Skin was Brown, baked by the unforgiving Tilean Sun, his Hands covered in Callouses. His Sword lacked all the Decorations that a Nobles usually had, Cold, Hard Steel, unadorned save for a small Ruby in the Pommel, which seemed to glow faintly with an Inner Light.

Even though he wore the Clothes and Weapons of a Noble I had never seen him In my Father's Estate, which meant that he was likely to be in Service to Fabien de Marguiless, the Lord that my Father had sold me off to. The Exorbitant Sum that the Bretonnian Patriarch had paid to secure the Marriage was Way too much for me of course.

Marrying into a Tilean Noble Family was expensive, but not THAT Expensive. That Meant that the true Purpose of the Trade was the Package on the Man's Lap.

Naturally, i wanted to know what the Marriage Gift contained. My Family's Fortunes were fading, and my Fathers had resorted to selling many of the magic artifacts collected by the Generations of Merchants and Smugglers employed by our family. Once our ancestors had sent their "grain ships", secret holds loaded with all manners of Arabian Artifacts all the Way to blessed Altdorf. But my Fathers weak Leadership eventually led my Family's Trade Empire to the Brink of Ruin, and now the many Nobles and Magicians of the Empires turned to the independent Smugglers sailing the Gulf of Tilea instead. Since my Family's Grip on the Trade Routes weakened many an enterprising Captain made his Fortune sating their Ever-present Hunger for the Potential Magic Artifacts unearthed from the Sands of Time in Araby.

The Carriage briefly darkened as one of their Guards passed by. The stretches between the great Cities were largely uncontrolled, for none of the Tilean Lords really felt the Responsibility to pay the great Number of Mercenaries that would be needed to secure the Roads, so they were plagued by all manners of Bandits, Outlaws , Greenskins and Monsters instead. To guard our Journey my Fathers had sent a Band of Sellswords with us.

Again, too much for a second daughter like me.

"Milord, may I ask about the Contents of the Package placed in your Holding by my dear Lord Fathers?". The Warden snorted, apparently amused by my Directness. "What is of such Import that it warranted my



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Marriage just to facilitate this Interaction between two such great Houses?

"It is none of your Concern, Milady" his voice was hard and scratchy, much rougher than the Voice of a man that spent his Life in Court. He shifted in his seat, then continued. "And you don't have to talk to me like that. I know from your Fathers that you are rather..." he hesitated for a Moment, apparently looking for a non-offending Word: "...Grounded for a Nobleman's Daughter".

"Well, then, let's talk equally then" I switched fluidly from the Way that the other Nobles talked to the more utilitarian way that my Fathers Cooks, Landkeepers and the Guards spoke. "What's in there? What's so important that my Fathers sold me off to some petty Lord?"

Being forbidden all the Things that I wanted to learn, Things like Swordplay, Shooting and Magic Lore, I had instead resorted to studying everything on my Father's Estate that I could get my Hands on, even the Speaking Manners of the Servants that my Fathers kept. His Face softened slightly, and I even fancied seeing a measure of Respect In his Eyes.

"I..."

He was interrupted by a Scream from outside, followed by a high Shriek of Terror from a Horse.

Suddenly the Air was filled with Screams and bellowed Orders from the Guards. "Form a Circle! Vicenso, ride them down! Gorgo, Shoot the Bas.." The Mercenary Captains Voice broke off and through my Window I could see the Man, still sitting in his Horse, his Chest pierced by several Arrows.

The Carriage slowed rapidly, the Driver doing his best to evade to Guards Horses, until we rumbled to a Stop in the Middle of the Road.

"Stay here" the Warden ordered, secreting the Package under his Cloak, bringing out a Pistol instead. With his Foot he kicked the Door open and stepped out of the Carriage, already aiming with the Left Hand, His Sword in the Right.

Outside the Carriage reigned Chaos, Mercenaries cowering behind their Dead Horses, Pierced by Various Arrows and Bolts. In the Long Grass of the Fields besides the Road Men were Men, clothed in Long Green Cloaks, almost invisible in the High Grass. Most of them were armed with Bows and, much more rarely, Crossbows, the rest with Swords and Axes.

Just as the Warden fired his first Shot he was Hit in the Shoulder. His Aim still ran true, his Target falling over, but from beneath his Cloak the Package fell, landing on the Edge of the Carriage Step.

With two Quick Strides he reached the first of the Charging Bandits and, without seeming to be bothered by his injury at all, hacked out half his Throat.

As he started butchering all that were in his Reach my Eyes wandered down to the Package still lying on the Floor. The Warden was a fearsome Warrior, but he was far outnumbered, eventually he would fall. And then they would come for me.

This would be my only Chance to ever know what was important enough for my Life to be bartered away. Most of the Women that my Father had tasked with Teaching me to be a Lady would likely have scolded me for having such Ideas. A Lady was supposed to always be regal, that also included not looking into things that I was told to leave alone.

With a smirk I decided to throw that all out the Window and took a Hold of the Package.

Under the Reign of all the Adrenalin coursing through me the Paper relented almost instantly, leaving me with a simple, unadorned Iron Ring inside a Wooden Box. If it was a Magical Artifact it certainly wasn't impressive. Without sparing my Upbringing another second I slipped it on my Finger, on the next Finger to the Golden Ring that my Mother had given me before my Departure.

Nothing. I hadn't expected much. But Nothing?

No Power Crackled over my Fingertips, no Desire to suddenly Throw Fireballs, just Nothing.

I looked back to the Warden outside. He had slain three more Bandits, but got hit two more times in return. As I watched he stabbed his sword through the Chest of another one of the Attackers, then finally slumped to



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his Knees. One of the Men in Green Cloaks finally kicked him in the Chest, toppling him over.

One after another the other Guards also fell to the Arrows crisscrossing the Road, until there was finally no one left.

"Search the Carriage! Get everything you can!" a Commanding Voice boomed as another of the Attackers strode around the back half of the Carriage.

He stepped up to the Door and looked inside. Then an Evil smile contorted his Features. "Hey Boys! Come and look what I found!"

The Men whooped and laughed as I was dragged out of the Carriage. They were still drunk on their Violence and Bloodshed, and relished every Second of the Entertainment "Look at the Rings! The Dress! She's a Noble for sure!" someone in the Crowd shouted as they forced me on my Knees. The Leader of the Bandits stood before me. He gestured for Silence and the Ruckus slowly died down.

"Rolfe!" he shouted, and a boy emerged from the Crowd beside him. "Today is your lucky Day! Today you can prove to be a MAN!" The last words drew another Round of Shouts from the Crowd. He threw a small Stiletto in my Direction and handed the Boy his own Blade. "Kill her, Rolfe. Prove that you are worthy to join us." Then he shoved the Boy in the Ring.

I had never held a Weapon in my Life, but I spent a lot of Time watching my Fathers Soldiers do it while I had been supposed to listen to Lectures that I was already able to recite in my Sleep. So I picked up the Knife, held it in a Trembling Grip before me and pointed it at the Boy.

"Keep your Legs Apart! And angle your Body, show `em only what you have to, Lads!" I could almost hear my Fathers Drill Sargent shouting at his Recruits. They hadn't paid Attention. I had.

My Fingers stopped trembling as I placed my Feet like the Sargent had shown. The Crowd roared their Approval, someone shouted "The little Cat has Claws after all!"

Apparently the Boy lacked my newfound Confidence. His Fingers were white knuckled about the Sword Grip, his Breathing Ragged and Quick. I could tell that he didn't want to do this either.

"Fight. FIGHT. FIGHT" the chant grew in the Crowd, and the Boy finally got his Courage together. "Die Wench!" he screamed, but I could tell that he didn't mean it. He lunged towards me, wildly swinging his sword, nearly hitting my Head as I sidestepped.

He immediately tried again, aiming for my Head. This time his sword got caught in my Long Hair, hacking out a good chunk of it but getting tangled in the Rest. Instinctively I tried to jump away from him, tried to bring some distance between his Blade and myself. As I did so I ripped the Sword from his Hand, overbalancing him. The Boy tried to catch himself, but after just a few steps he toppled to the Ground.

The Crowd stopped Chanting, stunned in Silence by the sudden shift of the Duel. I saw my chance, probably the only one that I would get. A quick leap forwards carried me towards him, pressing him back to the Ground just as he tried to rise. I lifted the small Knife, preparing to stab whatever I could hit, but just as I was ready to let it fall, he raised his eyes, looking right into mine. His Eyes were like a deer's, caught in front of a Hunters Arrow, like the ones of a Mouse as it was right in between the Cats Paws. I saw Panic there, Fear and Unwillingness to die. In that Moment he wasn't a Bandit that just tried to hit me with a Sword. Right then he was just a Boy, scared of the World, and scared to die. I hesitated, for only a second, but it was enough. Just as I rammed the Blade downward, I was tackled of the Boy by one of the Bandits.

The Bandit Leader stepped up to the Boy as he finally rose, brutally shoving him back down "You will regret this! Believe me!" He started brutally kicking him, again and again.

When the Boy finally stopped screaming the Bandit picked up the Sword and casually walked over to me.

"Be grateful that I don't have the patience to drag you back to our Camp! You're getting off lightly with this!"

Then he stabbed me, right in the Belly. The Blade burned like fire, my Blood washing warmly over my Legs.

Finally my Sight faded, releasing me from the Pain, my last view as the Bandit Leader Ripped his Sword out of the my Belly.



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I Hungrily gasped in Air, trying to get as much of the Lifegiving Substance in my Lungs as possible. They burned like Fire, like I tried diving in the Sea, far too deep to ever reach the surface.

My Right Arm burned Cold, like Ice. Tentatively I opened my Eyes. A faint light flowed over my Hand, originating from the Iron Ring on my Finger. Where did I get that again? My other Rings were missing, the Fingers bruised and aching, and as I Reached up to my Earrings I noticed that these too had been ripped out. My Dress was bunched up around my Hip and completely soaked in Blood. Also there was a Huge Tear along the Midriff of the Dress.

Finally I let my Eyes stray from myself to the Road and saw the Soldiers. My Mind went numb as I wandered around, from one Mutilated Corpse to the next. Eventually I found the Warden that had sat with my in the Carriage.

Something in my Brain went "Click" and it all rushed back to me. I collapsed to the Ground, amid all the Dead Men and started to Punch, Scream, Kick and Cry. I didn't notice the Passing of Time, I didn't care how long I spent there on that Blood-soaked Strip of Road, but when I finally calmed down and started to compose myself it was Night.

Apparently the Warden had survived the Three Arrows in His Body. He had dragged himself back to the Road, finally dying next to the Rump of one of the Horses. The Bandits had stripped him of his Weapons, his Sword and Gun were gone. I had to fight with Disgust before I could touch him. Strange. That I would feel disgust with touching a Corpse, just a few Hours ago I had almost killed a Human after all. While I was rifling through his Pockets I again noticed the simple Ring on my Finger. The Bandits had apparently thought it not Expensive enough to go through the Trouble of getting it off my Finger.

It was strange. I clearly remembered the Bandit Leader stabbing a Sword through my Belly and yet I was here. So what was I? Alive? Not Alive, but also not Dead? Or something else entirely? Was I even human? Troubled by these thoughts I didn't spend a single Look down the Road until it was almost too late.

The Bandits had been thorough, most Useful Things had already been looted. All I could pilfer was a small Knife, hidden in the Wardens Boot and some Rations of Food from the Mercenaries. After some consideration I stripped the smallest of the Mercenaries, also taking the Wardens Cloak off of him.

Men's Clothing felt weird on me, too roomy, too loose and, even though the Mercenary had been small for a man, they hung off of me like a Potato Sack.

Just as I finished closing the last few straps a low Braying sounded from downward the Street. I strained my Eyes, and could just discern a dark shape, formed roughly like a Man, but with a Goats Head upon his Shoulders. Beastmen! Another one of the Horrors that occupied these lands. Ghastly Parodies of Humans, intermingled with Parts of Beasts and Monsters. Picking the Opposite Direction from the one that the Beastmen was in I headed into the Forest.

I had been in the Woods before of course. But there were very few things that these dark and twisted Trees shared with the Cleared and tended Groups of Trees on my Father's Estate. The Underbrush was almost Chest High and full of Thorns and Bushes. At some point I broke through to a Deer Trail, which I then followed.

I didn't dare stop, my Fear of the Unnatural Beastmen keeping me on my Feet until the Sun finally rose over the Trees.

Some time, I wasn't sure how much, after Sunrise I finally slept a few fitful Hours in the Sanctuary of a Small Stone Crag broken into a Little Hill.

When I woke again I devoured the few Rations, which seemed to only make my Hunger greater, and drank from a small spring on Top of the Hill.

From its summit I could see that the Hills were getting more and more common, finally Rising into the towering Vaults, the great Mountains that bordered Tilea to the East and North.

I also spotted faint smoke trails. In the Night they would have been completely Invisible, but at Day they were clearly marking the Position of something.



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It could be the Beastmen bringing Sacrifices to their Dark Gods, it could be the Bandits celebrating their Victory, or a foul Greenskin Lair.

But it could also be a Camp of Good, Faithfull Men. Maybe a Group of Merchants from Tilea, Estalia or even the Distant Empire, maybe even a Host of Knights from Bretonnia, who would surely help a Lady in need.

In the End I headed in the Direction of the Smoke. It was either that, or the Long Walk back to my Father's Estate, at least a Week on Foot if I Walked on the Road, much more through the Woods. Days of Walking through Treacherous Terrain, infested by Bandits, Beastmen and Greenskins.

Without the Deer Trail to follow I had to blindly break through the Undergrowth. It took me the Rest of the Day to reach the Encampment and when I finally arrived, winded and bruised from the Long March, cut in dozens of Places from the Thorns, the Sun was already sinking.

The Camp was built into a Ravine, closed off from the Forest by a Wooden Palisade with a Gate in the Middle and a small Tower built next to it. A Single Man stood Guard on the Tower, clothed in the same kind of Muddled Green Camouflage Cloak that the other Bandits had worn. At the Sight of the Man I uttered a rather unladylike Curse that I had learned from one of my Fathers Cooks. I had found the Bandits after all.

It certainly limited my Options. I could either walk the long and uncertain Road back to Miragliano, or...

The Bandits had to have a Way to reach the next City. They had to have Horses, maybe even a Map. The Mercenaries had all been on Horseback, and not all the Horses had been at the Sight of the Ambush, that meant that the Bandits had kept at least some of them.

I may be a Lady of a Noble House, and I may never before have left my Fathers Estates, but I was still born of Tilea, a Land that was in almost Constant War with itself, and in Possession of a Ring that apparently made me Immortal. I had crawled through Blood, Mud and a Dark Forest to get here. I would find a Way to get through this. My Jaw set, my mind grim and determined, I proceeded to the Encampment.

I spent the Rest of the Way working my Way around the Camp, up the Ravine and down again on the other Side of the Wall. When I finally set foot on the Bandits Camp the Sun had already disappeared, and the Camp was only lit by the Fires of the Camp and the Bright Light of Mannslieb, the more natural of the two Moons.

The Bandits were still celebrating their Attack on my Carriage and I wasn't quite sure if they were still or again drunk. In their state it didn't make much of a difference. The Camp was littered with small Huts and Tents, but on the very Edges was still a Strip of Undergrowth left. In the Last two Days I had fought my Way through so many Bushes, I had learned to ignore their Thornes and sit quietly in the Middle of them. My Cloak was covered in Mud and Brush already, making me almost invisible. Eventually one of the Drunkards stumbled his Way over to me.

I rose as quietly as I was able, stole over to him and drew my Little Knife. When I was just a few Steps from him he suddenly turned "Tino? Is that you, I told you, i..." He stopped when he saw me, and I could see the Terror grabbing his Heart. In my Mud and Blood covered Clothes, with a Raised Knife in Hand I must surely have looked like a Demon. But this time I didn't make the same mistake as I did with the Boy. This Time my Knife slashed at him sure and true. He continued pissing, now in his Pants, as my First Strike hit him in the Chest. It wasn't lethal, his Rips saw to that, but it must have hurt like hell. Diverted by his Bones my Blade continued scratching downwards, creating a Bloody Furrow over his Chest. Still too stunned to scream, he waddled backwards, tripping over the Bushes and toppling backwards. On the Ground he finally found his Voice, but before he could bring out more than a Loud Moan I savagely kicked him in the Balls. He immediately abandoned his Scream in favor of a Pained Welp that almost made me feel pity with him und tried desperately to shield his most precious Bits, which opened up his Neck for my next Attack.

This time my Knife found its Mark, ripping right through his Windpipe.

The Bandit needed another Minute until he finally stopped trashing about. By this time his Blood had soaked through his Clothes, forming a puddle around him.

Numbly I stared at the newly made Corpse, my Mind Blank, all my Muscles quivering. I had just killed a



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Man. In cold Blood. With my own Hands. Promptly I vomited up what little my gut contained, fell on my Knees and broke into Sobs, alternated with mad giggles. The Situation seemed to somehow get closer. More real.

When I was finally able to stop giggling I gathered myself up from the Ground, snatched the Dagger from the Bandit and headed deeper into the Camp. This wasn't over. Not by a Long shot.

Most of the Bandits were Dancing, Drinking, some whoring and a few even Fist-fighting around the Central Bonfire in the Middle of the Camp. From the Cover of one of the Huts I studied every Face, but the Bandit Leader was nowhere to be found. The Man had killed me. He would have to die in Turn.

As the another Man headed for the Bushes I followed him, deciding upon him as my next Prey. The Bandit was huge, Broad as an Ox and just as packed with Muscle.

I had learned my lesson, this Time I went straight for the Neck while his back was still turned. I couldn't reach high enough to cut his Throat, so I stabbed my Knife to the Hilt into his Neck instead. I even did it with enough Force that the Point emerged from the other Side.

Instead of Bleeding out, like the first Man, he instead started choking and fell to his Knees, glaring around his Shoulder with Hatred in his Eyes. I could tell that he tried to Scream, but the only Thing coming from his Mouth was a wet gurgle. He didn't just lie down to die like my first Kill, he instead reared up, trying to grab my with his Last bits of strength. I narrowly managed to twist my Body out of the Way of his first attack, stepping directly into the Path of the Second.

His Grip around my Neck was Iron, his fingers like steel bars wrapped around my Throat. His other Hand came up, brutally ramming his Own Knife into my Side. Then he pressed me down, onto the Rocks forming the Ravines Ground. He slammed my Head against the Rocks, again, and again, and again.

When I woke my World was still dipped in Pain. I couldn't see, but with a quick rub over my Face, which caused my Abdomen to Hurt even more, I found out why. My Whole Head was covered in Blood, my Hair matted to an almost solid degree.

When I was finally able to see clearly my questing hand went downwards, to the Blazing Source of the Pain. The Bandits Knife was still burrowed in my side, quite a disturbing Amount of Blood flowing over the Blade.

Shouldn't the Ring have healed me? I looked at the Narrow Iron Band on my Right Hand, which was, like on my First Revival, Numb again, and yet somehow Burning at the same time. As I looked, the Last Traces of Magic disappeared into the Ring, leaving my without the Headwound but still Hurt.

Touching the Blade was Hell, pulling it out was even worse.

My Reasoning was simple. If the Ring hadn't healed my it had to be because the Blade was still in there. That just had to be the Reason, I had no Idea how to care for such a Wound, especially out here. If the Magic in the Ring was somehow exhausted, then this was going to be my End.

As the Dagger finally fell from my numb fingers I waited for something to happen, the same Blue Light to appear out of the Ring to close it up.

But nothing happened.

I stared at the Gaping Hole in my Belly and felt Despair rising within me. I had to do something, anything, to make the Pain stop. Slowly I started to get up, then, one step at a time, I made my way into the Camp. Then Bandits surely had a Healer, better to be a Prisoner than dead.

Just a few steps from the first Hut my Strength gave out. I slumped to the Ground, desperately staring at the Wound, trying to gather the Strength to Scream for Help. Any Help.

Eventually my World started to dim. This time it wasn't a Quick, nor a painless Death. As I found out Bleeding out took quite a while to finally a Life.

The Pain. It was... gone. Well, not gone, the Many Scratches on my Body from the Thorns and Fights alike



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still hurt. But the terrible Pain in my Belly, that was just... gone.

There was a Tear in my Shirt, but the Skin beneath was unblemished, still dirty and covered in Blood, but the Wound, it was gone.

Finally I understood. The Ring only Healed the One Wound that killed my, Leaving all others as they were.

Eventually I got up from my own little puddle of Blood. The Bandit hadn't made it farther then I did, he was also lying next to the first hut, finally drowned in his own Blood. I retrieved my Knife, added it to my growing Collection and then left him. His Body started to stink, he had pissed and shat himself in Death, and I wanted nothing of the Loot from his Body.

This time there was no Vomiting, no Tears, I had hardened after all.

I decided that I couldn't continue the Way that I had up to now. At some Point someone would notice that the Men weren't coming back. As soon as their Corpses were discovered they would hunt for me, and my Resurrecting Ring would help be useless if I was captured.

I would have to find their Leader, and figure out my Way from there.

On my Search I finally found the Horses. They were tethered in an improvised Stable, crowded far too closely in the small Building. Two or Three Horses would have comfortably fitted, but there were now six, leading them all to be agitated and on edge.

Four of my Guards Horses, still splattered in Blood, along with a Scrawny old Mare and a Nobleman's Magnificent Stallion that showed the telltale Signs of Lash and Iron. When he sensed me coming close the Stallion started snorting uneasily, even kicking out at the Nearby Horses. I wouldn't be able to get close to them without making a lot of Noise, enough to rouse even the passed out Drunkards, so I continued looking for their Leader instead.

I finally found the Man at the very Back of the Ravine, in one of the Huts. It was larger than most, guarded by its own Wall, with a small Garden at the Back. Hay and Straw had been stacked up next to it, likely for the Horses, Stolen from somewhere for sure. Carefully I peeked beneath the Door, and when I was sure that it was empty I entered.

The House was divided into three Rooms, one of Which even had a Wooden Floor, with a small Hearth in the Corner. I found the Bandit in the third, a Living Room by the Looks of it. He was seated on a long Table, two other Bandits with him.

The Boy that had tried to kill me stood in the Corner, his Face blackened by Bruises. He moved stiffly, favoring his Left Leg.

"Ever since that Bastard on the Road killed Marcus I am one Lieutenant short! You two better don't think me weak just because of that, or I'll show you what Weakness is!" The Leader was obviously drunk, he even swayed in his seat. He glared at the other two Men angrily, then went back to nursing his clay Stein.

The other Bandits shifted uneasily, apparently unsettled by the Threat.

"But Boss, we need more Money, the Men are unhappy because of the Dead in this last Haul, We will need to pay them at least.." one of them started, but was interrupted by the Leader drawing his Sword, and smashing it on the Table.

"Let them come to me if they have a Problem."

The Men shifted in their seats, even more discomfited then before. Hidden in the Corner by the Door, I mustered his sword. It was the Blade that the Warden had used, Red Ruby in the Pommel, otherwise an unadorned and utilitarian Blade.

"Rolfe! More Ale!" apparently the Bandits were all trying to drink themselves to death this night.

Without sticking around for the Rest of the Conversation I started sneaking back out. The Hearth in the Corner had inspired me to a Plan to deal with them, even though it made me sick to the Stomach.

The Hut had only small Windows, too narrow for a grown Man to climb through. It also had just a single door, ugly carpentry done by an Amateur at best, but still sturdy.



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The First of the Things I needed was easy to find. Plenty of Ropes were lying around the Stable, Leftovers from creating extra tethers to accommodate the extra Horses.

The Second thing was also Quickly Found. I stole a Burning Torch from the Next Hut over, where a Bandit was too busy ploughing a screaming whore to notice my intrusion.

My Plan was as simple as it was ruthless and Brutal. I barricaded the Door, stacked Hay and Scraps of Wood against the Wall, then set fire to it all.

It took two days for the Fire to die down. The Bandits had made a frenzied effort to quell the Flames and save their Camp, but in the End the Fire had spread. Now half the Camp consisted of burned-out Ruins and Rubble. Many of the Bandits had perished in the Flames, their Screams filling the Ravine. I reckoned that at this Point only fifteen to twenty were Left.

At some Point the two Men that I had killed were found, causing a Panic in the Camp, which had further delayed the Firefighting Efforts. Now most of the Bandits fearfully cowered around the last few remaining Huts. They kept up Triple Watches, scared of some Beast or Spirit of the Forest. Most of them tried to keep awake as long as possible, which led to them all being exhausted at this Point. The Fire had apparently also consumed the Armory of the Bandits, as they now carried only their Personal Weapons, Sticks, Clubs, Knives, and a few Swords and Axes instead of Bows and Crossbows.

I had spent the two Days hidden on the Cliff, hidden in the many Cracks and small Caves riddling the Stone. My Diet consisted of Berries and Food stolen from the Camp, not enough to keep the Hunger away, barely enough to keep me from Starving. I had dared a few Raids, killing two more Men in the Process, looting a Sword and another Knife off them. Most of my Time was spent on either watching the Camp, or practicing with my Knives. By now I was able to hit a small Stone from a few Meters away in three out of my Four Tries.

The Sword was too heavy for me to swing around, so I left it in the Caves, opting for the Knives instead.

Under the Cover of Night I descended into the Valley again, evading the few tired sentries posted along the Walls of the Ravine. They were nearly at the End of their Half-Day Shift and looked into the Night tiredly. I had grown better at sneaking through the Bushes each time that I had dared the Trip. None of the Sentries managed to spot even a Whisper of my Passing.

The Fire had claimed the Bandit Leader along with his Lieutenants, so the Camp had split into two Groups. One, headed by a Large Brute fittingly named "Schläger" in Reikspiel had opted to Hunt down the "Shadow of the Tettovere" as they had named me. Apparently this part of the Forest was called "Tettovere" by the Locals after some ancient Bretonnian Lord that had defeated an Greenskin WAAGH here.

I doubted that Schläger knew what his Name meant, he likely wasn't even able to count farther than his nine remaining Fingers. That didn't stop him from introducing anyone that dared mention this Fact were introduced to his Giant Mace though, which he lovingly called "Darling".

The Only Man that dared say so aloud was "Fibar", judging by his Accent he was an Estalian, though I hadn't been able to really find out much about him. Talk in the Camp was that he had once been a duelist, killing the Wrong Noble over the Hand of a Lady.

He had found the Blade of the Warden in the Rubble of the Leaders Hut, carrying it around in the Estalian Duelists Style, with a Stiletto to complement it.

The Flames had blackened the Blade, making the Ruby stand out even more. White Runes along the Blades Length had also been made visible, though their meaning eluded me.

He led the Second Group in Camp, slightly larger than Schlägers, but mostly composed of the Non-Fighters of the Camp. They wanted to abandon the Camp, heading back to the nearest City, searching their Fortune from there.

At the Moment the Camp was locked in indecision, each of the Groups unwilling to act without the People in



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the Other one. Instead they stayed in the Camp and waited for the Confrontation that would eventually come.

I had decided to wait for that Fight. Of the Remaining People in Camp, Schläger and Fibar were by far the most dangerous ones, them killing each other was the Best thing that could happen to me.

In the Meantime I would slowly whittle away at their numbers, killing the People that were straying away from the Crowd whenever I was able to get away with it.

My Prey for the Day was a Woman. The four surviving Females in the Camp usually kept together, forming a small clutter in the Middle of the Men's larger Protective Circle. They slept together, ate together and even went to the shitter together.

At this time of the Night the other three were already sleeping, and apparently the fourth had decided to brave the Night for a quick Pee. Bad Decision.

My Mouth slowly drew itself in a demonic smile as the Woman wandered out beyond the Sight of the Half asleep Sentries. She passed by my Hiding Place so close that she would have been able to touch Hands, but my Prey never suspected a Thing.

By this time my Cloak was torn, mud and Blood-Splattered to the Point that I was unrecognizable almost anywhere in the Forest as long as I stood still. And I had grown very good at that.

The Woman jumped at any menacing shadow and noise on the Way, but she never noticed the Actual Danger lurking right beside her. She crouched down beside a Bush, ruffling her Dress up to her hips while staring out fearfully into the Night.

I almost couldn't believe that I had been like that just a few days ago, jumping at every sound, being scared of every shadow. Now the Woods almost felt like home to me.

I slowly crept around the Woman until I was close enough that I could have tapped her on the Shoulder. My Hand closed around my Mouth, silencing my startled Scream instantly. While doing this I was careful to keep my Fingers out of my Biting Mouth, a Day earlier I had almost lost a finger this way.

The Woman tried to escape, but she was far too slow, the Dagger plunging into her Neck before she could even rip the Hand from her Mouth.

Slowly I stood up and considered the Woman. My last two Kills had been messy, both had been Big, Strong Men, requiring many Wounds to finally die. One had even Managed to Kill me by Bashing my Face in with a Rock. Their State had inspired quite a lot of Fear and Terror in the Camp.

I hadn't vomited since my very first Kill and I had made the Last two without even being sick to the Stomach. I would get through this as well.

They found my Prey in the Morning, and immediately Cries of Alarm swept throughout the Camp. I was hidden in a Small cave on the South Side of the Ravine, from where I could see the Central Opening where most of the Bandits had spent the Night.

The Morning Sentries bore the Woman's Body into the Middle of the Camp, displaying her Ugly Wounds to the Crowd. Numerous Wounds covered her Body and a Huge Cut disfigured her Face. Despite being already dead she had eventually started bleeding, making the Scene even more gruesome.

While the three remaining Women started mewling about the Corpse Fibro finally made his move. He advanced on Schläger, pointing an accusing Finger at him. "She died because of YOU!" he thundered "Because YOU want to stay! Because YOU keep us from Leaving!". I had to admit, he was good. With just a few sentences he had managed to turn half the Camp to his side. Only the most loyal of Schlägers Men leapt up to stand with him. Before Schläger could formulate a response Fibro drew his Weapons: "Now you'll pay!" he leapt for Schläger, who narrowly parried his first thrust with his mace. His few Loyal men scrambled to meet the Men that rushed to Fibro's aid, hefting Swords, Knives, Clubs and even a few Sticks and Shovels.

All the Pent up Frustration and Rage that had built for Days within the Camp erupted with an almost Feelable Relief. The Struggle was short, bloody and excessively violent. Roused by his Fiery Speech most of the Bandits stood with Fibro, bringing their Opponents down with a mad rush of Pure Bloodlust.



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Schläger had enormous Heaps of Muscle, enough Power to crush Fibro in a single Stroke. The quicker Man however danced around every Stroke of the Big, but slow and predictable Mace. With every Evasion and Block he managed to cut Schläger with Dagger or Sword. Shallow, superficial Wounds, but eventually they started to add up. Schläger tired, his Attacks growing scarcer and slower.

Fibro finally darted inside his range, cutting through the Brutes Knee Tendons, causing him to fall to his Knees. He used his Chance to hack Schlägers Weapon-hand off at the Wrist with his Sword, then ramming it into his Chest.

The Bigger man died kneeling, held Horizontal only by the Swords Point sticking out his Back.

"At noon, we ride!" Fibros announcement got a ragged cheered from the Survivors, standing on the Broken and Beaten Corpses of their Comrades, numbering only nine.

It took the surviving Bandits half the Day to get ready, packing their few remaining belongings and tending to the Wounds they had received in the Fire and Fighting. When they tried to get to the Horses they also ran into Problems. While the Scraggy Mare and the Guards Horses were Docile enough the Black Stallion started Kicking the Moment anybody approached him. Eventually they left him behind, leaving the Camp as the Sun stood high in the Sky. It was a sorry little Convoy that made its Way out into the Woods.

Their Chance to survive the Journey were questionable at best, the Road to the City was Long, and plagued by all Kinds of Danger.

I took my Time descending from the Mountain, getting all the Little Hoards of Food and Loot that I had amassed. Many Coins, Rings and other Valuables had been Hidden in the Huts, I had even found my own stolen Rings and Earrings behind a Wall Panel. My Pack was well filled pack when I finally arrived at the Stables. The looted Sword was also in the Pack, even though I still couldn't use it.

The Horse was distrustful of me, understandably so considering the Amounts of Dirt and Blood that I was covered in.

I spent the Rest of the Day looting the Camp further and staying with the Horse, feeding him Carrots and slowly getting him used to me. In the Night he finally allowed me to touch him, eventually accepting my Pack on his back without trying to plant a hoof in my Face.

In the Morning I managed to saddle him, and by Noon we arrived at the Road, having left the Forest and most of its Horrors behind via a Game Trail barely broad enough to accommodate the Horse.

"Bastard" as I had decided upon his Name, was a vicious Prick, hence the Name. He was unlike all the Horses at my Fathers Estates, were they were friendly, playful and swift he was determined, grim, scarred and Heavy Boned, more of a Warhorse then the Riding Horses I was used to.

The Crossing was marked by a simple Wooden Stake, with a small Board "Miragliano" upon it.

The Road to the Right led back to my Father's Estate, back to my Life of Dresses and Balls. I could easily go back, give my Fathers the Ring, Throw away my Weapons, my Blood-soaked Clothes and all my newly acquired Knowledge and return to my luxurious Life, to never have a care in the World again, eventually to be married of to one Lord or another.

The Road to the Left however was marked with the Sign: "Miragliano". It let to the City of Merchants, of Thieves and a free Life.

There I could decide my own Fate, do what I wanted, life like I wanted and eventually die like I wanted.

With a sly smile I looked down on my Hand, Mud stained, adorned by a single simple Iron Ring, as unlike to a Lady's as Possible. Maybe I could even die a few Times if I wanted. After all, who was to stop me?

Lillian of House Santora died on that lonely strip of Land, and in her Place Lillian the Undying was born as I brought Bastard around to the Left.

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