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LURE OF POWER™

A GUIDE TO NOBILITY & SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS IN THE EMPIRE

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CORE PRODUCT

Throughout *Lure of Power*, reference will be made to the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* Core Product. This refers to either the books within the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* Box Set (*Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* Rulebook, *Tome of Adventure*, *Tome of Blessings*, *Tome of Mysteries*) or the Guides (*Player's Guide*, *Game Master's Guide*, *Creature's Guide*).

NEW RULES

In addition to a wealth of new information and background material on the nobility of the Empire and Ubersreik specifically, as well as Slaanesh and his minions, *Lure of Power* includes some new and expanded rules on social encounters and secret societies. Players and GMs should familiarise themselves with these new rules before using them in play.

NOBILITY RULES

Includes new optional rules and content for playing noble character. These rules can be found in Chapter 5, starting on page 26 of this book.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTER RULES

Includes new optional rules and content for running expanded social encounters as well as the Duel of Wits. These rules can be found in Chapter 5, starting on page 32 of this book.

SECRET SOCIETIES RULES

Includes new rules and content for secret societies as well as their hidden inner circles. These rules can be found in Chapter 3 of the *Book of Pleasure*.

MARKS OF SLAANESH

The Ruinous Powers may bequeath a special boon upon one of their followers, a Mark of Chaos. The Mark of Slaanesh and its effects are discussed on pages 8 and 15 of the *Book of Pleasure*.

USING THE MATERIALS INCLUDED WITH LURE OF POWER

Lure of Power includes a variety of new cards, sheets, and components for the Game Master and his players.

NEW CARDS

The action, location, item, condition, and talent cards can be added to the other cards of those types and used as needed.

CREATURE CARDS

Lure of Power includes 17 new creature cards. Full rules for creature cards can be found in the *Creature Guide* and abbreviated rules can be found in Chapter 2 of the *Book of Pleasure* on page 11.

MUTATION CARDS

Lure of Power includes 6 new mutation cards. The complete rules for mutation and corruption can be found in *Winds of Magic* or the *Game Master's Guide*, available separately. If you are not using the rules for mutation and corruption, then when an effect calls for a target to suffer corruption, the target should suffer an equal amount of fatigue and stress instead.

PUNCHBOARD

The punchboard components should be carefully removed from the frames. The pieces can be added to your existing supply of tokens and standups for *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*.

SECRET SOCIETY SHEET

The Old World is filled with members-only organisations that vet aspiring members. Membership structures can be so complicated and convoluted that it is relatively easy to conceal a society's darker, or even profane, practices from the public and, in many cases, lower members of the organisation. Secret Society sheets are used to track the depth of any PC who has joined a society's ranks. See Chapter 3 of the *Book of Pleasure* for more information about Secret Society sheets.



RETAINER CARDS

As characters grow in wealth and power, they may find themselves in a position to acquire a staff of talented and loyal assistants to attend to the day-to-day business they themselves have neither the time nor interest to manage. These assistants are known as retainers, and are represented by cards very similar to item cards. See Chapter 5 of this book for more information about Retainer cards.



SET ICON

The cards and sheets included with *Lure of Power* are noted with a special set icon. This allows you to quickly identify the supplement materials when sorting, adding, or removing cards from your game.





CHAPTER ONE

NOBILITY IN THE EMPIRE

The Empire is a federation of independent states – often called provinces – governed by hereditary rulers that derive their authority from the founder of the Empire himself – Sigmar Heldenhammer. It is from the ranks of these ruling ‘Elector Counts’ that an Emperor is chosen, an individual fated to lead this conglomeration of disparate peoples against whatever evils the world may conspire to inflict upon it. The Empire is beset by numerous foes, both from within and without. The mountains teem with savage green-skin tribes, while the dense forests that swathe much of the land resound with the atavistic war cries of beastman warherds. Chaos incursions from the north are a constant threat and the fractious southern nations of the Old World are rarely at peace with one another for long. Worse still is the threat of internecine war between the Empire’s own provinces, for each is descended from one of the ancient tribes of man. Though united by Sigmar so long ago, the people of each state are proud, and the entire federation has been plunged into bitter civil war many times over the millennia.

It is the solemn responsibility of the noble classes of the Empire to guide the provinces through this age of war. They must lead the armies of the Empire in times of calamity and govern wisely during the fleeting periods of calm. In this, the nobility can trace the roots of its powers back two and a half millennia and more. Before the age of the Empire, the men of the west were scattered across vast

tracts of forested land and divided into bitterly warring tribes. Men slew one another without reason or remorse, all the while cowering from the darkness of the forest eaves. Beastmen and other, nameless things ruled the shadows while orcs and goblins descended from the mountains to enslave and slaughter at will. A tribe without a strong ruler could not stand against such dire threats. Before the coming of Sigmar, the race of men stood ever upon the brink of extinction.

When Sigmar united the tribes, he laid the foundations of the system that has endured, in one form or another, to the present day. Provinces have risen and fallen over the centuries, and new city states have been born as rural populations flocked together into large settlements, whether to pursue some trade or simply seek protection from the evils that roam the land. Sigmar himself has been elevated far beyond the patron of the Empire and is now venerated as a deity. The rule of the noble classes is enshrined in the tradition established by their godly ancestor and the tribal chiefs he united. Knowing that their authority is rooted in the deeds and commands of a god, the Elector Counts rule over their lands with an iron grip that has, thus far, at least, kept the darkness at bay.

THE TRIBES OF MAN

The peoples of each province are the descendants of the ancient tribesmen united by Sigmar. Most tribes existed for untold generations before the birth of the Empire and fought numerous, bitter wars over that time. They had their own traditions and heroes, and all tribes claimed a blood-right to the territories that sustained them. Most men spoke a common tongue, but each tribe had its own accent and often its own dialect, so that two men from different tribes could scarcely understand one another in conversation. Two and a half millennia later, the same still holds true, especially among the more isolated provincials. These folk cleave to the old ways almost as if the Empire had never risen to unite the warring tribes.

In the years preceding the birth of the Empire, the land was ruled by about a dozen main tribal groupings with numerous vassal tribes beneath them. Some harboured bitter resentments towards one another, while others were staunch allies. Though all claimed ownership of vast areas of land, such title was notional at best, as some would say is still true today. In reality, most men lived behind crude wooden palisades and earthworks, and those who dared work the land did so with one eye ever watchful for savage beastmen and greenskins emerging from the forests. If the alarm was raised in time, they might escape to the nearest hill fort; otherwise, they were likely to suffer a hideous death at the hands of the vile beasts that truly ruled the lands.

In the northernmost reaches of the land now called the Empire lived the Udose and Roppsmenn tribes. The latter were driven into the cold lands of Kislev when they aided the savage Norsii against Sigmar's army and in so doing forfeited their place in the nascent Empire. The Norsii themselves were driven across the Sea of Glass where their descendants still live today, warring with one another and their neighbours and venerating cruel gods whose name civilised men do not speak.

In the east lived the Ostagoths, a hardy people whose lands were shadowed by the towering World's Edge Mountains. The descendants of the Ostagoths established the province of Ostermark. South of the lands of the Ostagoths were those of the Asoborns, the Brigundians, the Merogens, and Menogoths, and the provinces that stand today in those territories are known as Stirland, Averland and Wissenland. For centuries, the province of Solland existed here too, before the mighty orc warlord Gorbak Ironclaw slew its Elector Count, seized the trappings of his power, and razed much of the land to ashes.

In the shadow of the Grey Mountains on the Empire's southern borders lived the Unberogens and the Endals. The former claimed the region now occupied by the province of Reikland, while the Endals' lands comprised the southern portion of the region known as the Wasteland. Further west still were the Bretonii, a tribe that refused to submit to Sigmar's rule and was driven over the Grey Mountains to settle the lands now known as Bretonnia.

The northern portion of the Wasteland was claimed by the Jutone tribe, a proud and independently minded people whose leader Marius swore allegiance to Sigmar only in the aftermath of his great victory at Black Fire Pass.

To the east of the Jutones' lands were the Teutogens, who were absorbed into the Unberogens when Sigmar slew their ruler Artur, as well as the Thuringians and the Taleutens.

Most of the land claimed by these peoples was, as it remains today, dense, dark forest. Even today, comparatively few roads cross the region, for the woodland is voracious and will reclaim any path hewn through it within a short space of time. In those distant days, the only metalled roads in existence were those built by races older still than man – the elves and the dwarfs, who had abandoned much on the Old World over the centuries. The Old Dwarf Road, leading from Black Fire Pass to the west, was one of the few passable routes, the remainder being little more than hunters' paths that existed only so long as they were used. Most people did not travel far afield themselves, for to do so was simply too dangerous. Occasionally, a caravan of dwarf merchants would emerge from the mountains, and it was by the teachings of these master craftsmen that men learned to work metal. When travel was called for, many men utilised small coracles to navigate the rivers, though to do so during times of flood was all but suicidal.

It was on the road from Axe Bite Pass in the Grey Mountains that Sigmar's tale began and the foundation of the Empire was laid.

SIGMAR AND THE BIRTH OF THE EMPIRE

The legend of the birth of Sigmar is the legend of the birth of the Empire itself. There are numerous variants of the tale, each with countless twists and turns according to local tradition. The only contemporary accounts recorded at the time were those set down by the dwarfs, for men were far more concerned with simple survival than maintaining written histories. Most accounts agree that all manner of portents were witnessed prior to Sigmar's birth, most of them foretelling that the son of the Unberogen chieftain Bjorn and his wife Griselda would grow up to be a man of great significance. The legend states that Sigmar was born upon the field of battle and that his mother died during his birth. At the very moment Sigmar came into the world he would have such effect upon, a twin-tailed comet crossed the sky, perhaps the most portentous sign of destiny and fate in the Old World.

The young Sigmar is said to have possessed a unique drive to set aside the struggles of men and bring the tribes together to fight their enemies as one. At the age of only fifteen, Sigmar rescued the dwarf High King, Kurgan Ironbeard, from marauding orcs and thus earned the eternal friendship of the doughty old warrior. Kurgan presented the young Sigmar with the mighty, rune-bound war hammer Ghal-maraz, the name meaning 'skull splitter' in the tongue of the dwarfs. The weapon would become one with the warrior and the Empire, as much his sign as the twin-tailed comet that marked his birth. At the Battle of Astofen Bridge, Sigmar truly earned the right to bear Ghal-maraz in battle, defeating a large band of orcs besieging an isolated settlement. The years that followed saw Sigmar's father Bjorn fall in battle against the savage Norsii, but in so doing such an example of kinship was set that Sigmar was able to forge unbreakable ties between a core of tribes. Still, some would not join him, viewing his vision of unity as a means of crowning one man above all others, and many battles were fought against those who opposed Sigmar and his allies. After many years, many battles, and many bold deeds in which he proved his right to lead, Sigmar had united those tribes that would stand together and expelled, defeated, or otherwise subsumed those that would not. And just in time, for the nascent Empire was to face the greatest challenge of its as-yet brief existence, one matched few times in its subsequent history.



At the Battle of Black Fire Pass, the tribes of men stood alongside the dwarfs of King Kurgan against the largest greenskin migration ever to have threatened the Old World. Men and dwarfs fought for many long hours, the narrow pass funnelling wave after wave of orcs, goblins, trolls and other vile creatures onto their lives. Sigmar commanded his forces as no man ever had before, directing the defence, and retiring spent warbands while committing fresh ones as the enemy came on relentlessly. The terrain worked to Sigmar's advantage, for the orcs and goblins could not commit their superior numbers all at once. Though horribly outnumbered, the men and dwarfs under Sigmar and Kurgan held firm. Where the fighting grew desperate, Sigmar intervened, Ghal-maraz rising and falling countless times and turning the rocky ground of Black Fire Pass dark with greenskin blood. By the battle's end, the invaders were routed and the Old World saved, though at terrible cost to both man and dwarf.

Sigmar was crowned Emperor by the High Priest of Ulric and King Kurgan ordered his greatest Runesmith, Alaric the Mad, to forge a mighty rune-engraved blade for each of the twelve tribal kings who had sworn fealty to the Lord of Men. Though these were not completed until Sigmar was no more, the so-called 'Runefangs' remain to this day the symbol of authority by which an Elector Count rules his province.

Sigmar led his people through many more trials and crises, most notably defeating Nagash, the First Necromancer and Lord of the Undead, at the gates of Reiksdorf itself. Many years later, having firmly established the foundations of his Empire, Sigmar took leave of his people and his land. Some legends state that he grew weary of peace, others that he had some vow to fulfil or deed to perform. Upon the fiftieth year of his rule, Sigmar left his Empire without fanfare or ceremony. Travelling eastward, Sigmar passed by all the great works he had brought about and knew that his task was

done. Alone, he went east, never to be seen again, passing from the lives of men and into history. Within a generation, the Cult of Sigmar had been born; men claimed their lord had not died, but instead ascended to become a new god, one born of mortal origins but destined to defend his people as long as his Empire stood.

THE RISE OF THE ELECTOR COUNTS

Sigmar left no heir behind him when departed. Thus, it was unclear to whom the succession should pass. A situation that might have devolved into inter-tribe warfare and undone all the great works of Sigmar was settled when the kings determined to elect one of their number to lead. Thus was established the system of the Elector Counts, a system that would face many challenges over the millennia, but would also see the Empire through numerous wars and invasions. Sigmar had always sought to unite the tribes rather than to lead them and had only ever imposed his own will in matters that affected the Empire as a whole. No one man, Sigmar had declared, could or should rule the whole of the land, and the establishment of the Electors maintained this core principle. How each king ruled his tribe, or as time went by, each Elector Count ruled his province, was his business and his alone. He who was elected Emperor wielded great power, but only at the forbearance of his peers, who upon his death or abdication might very well set the crown upon the head of another's heir, not his.

Sigmar's mourning peers chose Hedrich I as the first successor, and it was this leader to whom Alaric the Mad presented the completed Runefangs. The first millennium of the Empire's history is barely recorded, for it was an age of strife and war, and those records that do exist are incomplete and often contradictory. In many cases, the archives of other races contain more details of this age than those of the Empire, but being recorded from the outsider's perspective, they are of little use to the scholar. Nevertheless, the system of Electors continued, producing some of the greatest heroes since Sigmar as well as some of the most nefarious villains in history. When the celebrated Emperor Mandred I was assassinated in 1152, no successor could be agreed upon and the system all but collapsed for an age. Three provinces declared their Count to be the true successor and a devastating series of civil wars was fought. In the year 1979, the Electors finally agreed upon a single ruler, but this was the infant Magritta of Marienburg, whose election the Grand Theogonist denounced. The Electoral system collapsed entirely, and the next three hundred years saw the provinces entirely divided. Without an Emperor to unite them against external threats, the provinces looked to their own protection, often neither seeking or expecting aid from their neighbours.

It was during this period that the mercantile burgomeisters first rose to prominence, for the power of the nobility was greatly curtailed by their inability to call upon aid from distant relatives. Instead of drawing upon familial or political influence, the nobles of each province were forced to seek it within their own lands from merchants, money-lenders, and other low-born, but wealthy, types. The need to tax the populace led to concessions and the granting of petty titles simply to raise armies and defend the land against the ceaseless invasions of greenskins, beastmen, the undead, and Chaos.

It was the Great War Against Chaos of 2302 that saw the Empire reunited under a single great leader. That man was Magnus the Pious, a warrior-leader second only to Sigmar himself in the adoration of