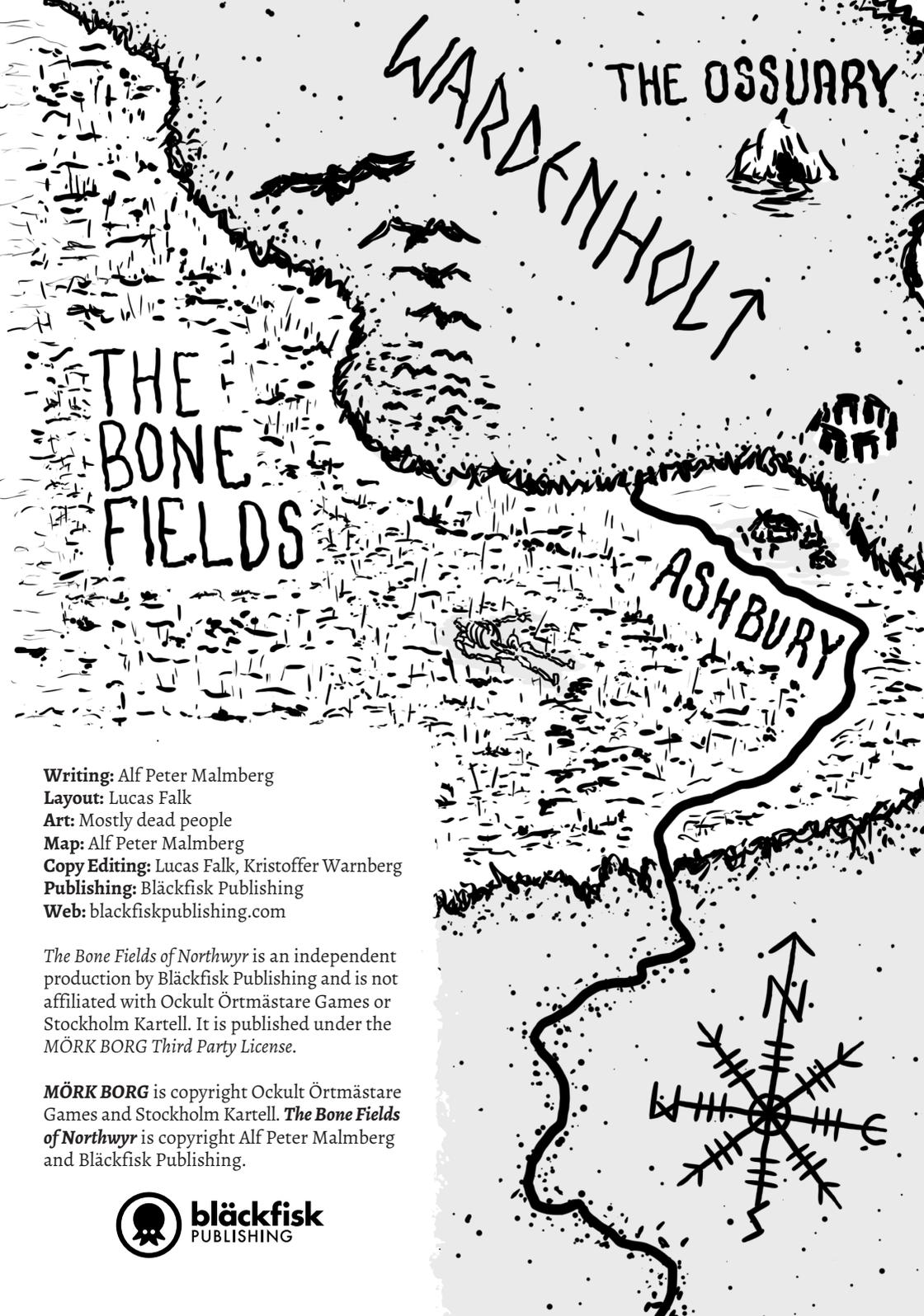


# the BONE FIELDS of Northwyrk

A Cursed and Frostbitten Sandbox  
by Alf Peter Malmberg

Compatible with

**MIRK BORG**



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# FROSTMIRE



## Northwyr

The Bone Fields—remains of the old battle-grounds—run like unholy scars across both the landscape and the history of the region. Northwyr is a desolate area on the outskirts of the world, once ravaged by war. Settlements were burned, the population was slain, and everything of value was plundered.

On the heathlands of Northwyr, the armies clashed in a final and fateful skirmish. On one side, the far superior troops from the South—and on the other, the outnumbered local chieftains and their resistance militia. In order to stand a chance at all, the chieftains made a covenant with the mountain giants from the East.

Even so, the local forces were completely annihilated—giants and chieftains alike—every single soldier fell. But due to the devastating losses, the invaders were forced to return south. And as the North won its freedom, it also lost its future.

Nearby the vast battlefield lies a deep primeval forest. During the war, many sought refuge in this forest, in hopes of avoiding the devastation. And so the forest came to be called *Wardenholt*.

When the war was over, the *Keeper of the Woods*—an ancient guardian spirit—cursed humanity for its reckless destruction. Thus all refugees were driven out of *Wardenholt*, and the souls of the fallen became trapped in the Spirit Realm—a parallel dimension halfway to the Underworld—and turned into wailing undead. The curse will plague Northwyr until nature reclaims that of which it was deprived.

## Story Hook

You have been offered a small reward to check up on the *Priestesses of Ashbury*. They live in isolation and without protection in the inhospitable Northwyr, and no one has heard from them in years. You are all familiar with the old tales of Northwyr: The whole region was left in ruins during wars of ancient times, and some say that it has been cursed and haunted ever since.

## Opening Scene

After a long day's travel through the dense borderwoods to Northwyr, darkness assaults you mercilessly when you finally arrive. The moon shines down upon you as you gaze out at the open heathlands. But instead of grass swaying in the breeze, there are seemingly endless piles of white bleached bones and lifeless skeletal remains. A sudden, suppressive silence envelops you—as if an invisible damp blanket was tossed over you.

## THE BONE FIELDS

- ✦ A vast barren heath, without any signs of life.
- ✦ Pale skeletons of humans and horses are scattered all across the field.
- ✦ Ancient wargear still lies among the dead—though most of it is broken, rusty and decayed.
- ✦ Spears, banners and arrows still protrude from the layer of bones—like a small, sparse and wicked forest.
- ✦ From afar, human-like shapes can be seen out on the field—moving when you blink or look away (*Bone Terrors* and *Gravestalkers*).
- ✦ A thick fog often covers the field, at times movements stir about in it (*Mistwraiths*).
- ✦ Out on the field it is silent as the grave, except for the distant cawing from the *Carrion Crows* in *Wardenholt*.
- ✦ In the center of the field lies a 30 feet long giant skeleton (*Varbackolar*)—its skull missing.



# WARDEN- HOLT

- A primeval forest with trees centuries old—mighty tree trunks with thick cracked bark, and gnarly branches.
- A thick layer of moss covers practically everything. Watch your step so you don't slip!
- Passing through the forest is difficult, as it is hilly and littered with fallen rotting trees.
- Human remains can be found in old thorn bushes, under the moss, and among the curious roots of the trees.
- The wildlife here is strange and unnatural. Many of the animals are erratic and display odd behaviors. Some come intrusively close, while others constantly stay at a safe distance (see *Sickly Wildlife*).
- In a glade on the outskirts of the forest towards *Ashbury* stands an ancient circle of stones. It is an old site for sacrificial rites. Bronze items can still be found here, as well as a *Cursed Artifact*.
- Immense colonies of *Carrion Crows* breed in the treetops closest to the *Bone Fields*. They might at any time break out in a sudden horrifying cacophony, plunging down to attack any intruders.
- On the outskirts of the forest towards *Frostmire*, hundreds of skulls are hanging in the trees surrounding a cave entrance (the *Ossuary*). The ground here is covered in huge paw marks (from the *Hellhound*).

## THE KEEPER OF THE WOODS

- A centaur-like spirit being, as ancient and unfathomable as the forest itself.
- Its body is made out of animal bones. The head is a skull of a moose with enormous palmate antlers. The arms and fingers are long, like a bat's wings.
- Its presence is surrounded by a faint darkness, seemingly absorbing the light around it.
- It is one with plants and wildlife. The *Carrion Crows* are its eyes and ears—always bringing the latest news.
- It is always encircled by wild animals, feeble, deformed and sickly (see *Sickly Wildlife*). The weaker animals are drawn to it for protection.

**Motive:** Caring for the forest and its denizens.

**Desire:** A sacrifice of human blood from the *Priestesses of Ashbury*. This will give the *Keeper of the Woods* back its former strength, so that it may drive out the spreading disease from the forest.

**Reward:** A promise to destroy the *Hellhound*—such monstrosities of the Underworld must not roam this world.

**HP 32 Morale - Bony -d4 Antlers/hooves d6**

**Special:** Can ensnare with roots and vines. Test Agility DR12 to avoid being caught.



# Ashbury

- ✘ An old worn down farmstead with a dwelling house and two ruined outhouses.
- ✘ The outside of the dwelling house is covered in protective rune carvings—it is as if every square inch has been filled, even the door. Poles with human skulls on top of them stand in front of the house.
- ✘ The outhouses are destroyed, the remaining structures are full of claw and bite marks. Huge paw imprints can be seen everywhere in the muddy ground surrounding the houses (from the *Hellhound*).
- ✘ The dwelling house is divided into a living quarter—with benches along the walls and a fireplace in the middle—and a stable part with an old mare.
- ✘ On a throne in the living quarters sits a mummified old woman, seemingly alive but completely still (“Grandmother”).
- ✘ The insides of the walls are covered with weapons, shields, helmets and other pieces of armor scavenged from the *Bone Fields*. There is also a *Cursed Artifact* here.

# The Priestesses

- ✘ Four women and an infant, isolated from the rest of the world. In descending age order: “Grandmother”, Kari, Nori, Siri, and the infant that is not yet named.
- ✘ The Priestesses are the last in a long line of religious devotees in Northwyr. Before the war they were the religious leaders, but as the region was depopulated they stayed behind and continued their worship in seclusion.
- ✘ They wear brown garments—long pieces of cloth that they wrap around themselves.
- ✘ They have horns on the sides of their heads, like sheep. The older women have large rounded curved horns, while the younger ones only have short stubs.
- ✘ Kari, Nori and Siri address each other as “sister”, even though they seem to be decades apart age wise.
- ✘ “Grandmother” has long since passed away. Her body has been mummified and she now sits still on her throne. The other Priestesses treat her as if she was alive and often walk over to her—whispering to her and listening for her reply.
- ✘ The women are very careful to sing spells and carve runes to protect them from the evil that resides in these cursed lands.

**Motive:** To lift the curse that haunts Northwyr, so they can continue their legacy.

**Desire:** To slay the beast who roams the area at night (the *Hellhound*).

**Reward:** The *Cursed Artifact* or another piece of equipment from the walls of their house.

HP 5 Morale 5 Fists/horns d4



# FROSTMIRE

- ⊙ A vast swamp with knee high murky water.
- ⊙ There is an unearthly cold here, that penetrates all clothing. The water surface is covered by a layer of ice of varying thickness. It's strong enough to walk across—most of the time.
- ⊙ The trees here are rotten to the core and are still standing only because the ice keeps them in place.
- ⊙ Human corpses are scattered across the bog, frozen stuck in the ice. Most of them lie beneath the ice, but some have their heads, arms and torsos above the surface. The cold has seemingly prevented them from decaying. There are no weapons or war gear lying around here. These people were not soldiers.
- ⊙ Should random encounter 2–3 occur here, the dead awaken and try to grab anyone who passes by.
- ⊙ In the middle of the swamp, an old rowboat is frozen in place. A large collection of silver and gold items lies at its bottom—everything from coins to exquisite jewellery. There is also a *Cursed Artifact* here.
- ⊙ Large snow-white scales can be seen through the ice around the rowboat (the *Ice Wurm*). Some distance away, a giant snout protrudes the ice, easily mistaken for a rock. If anyone should touch the boat or her snout, she will awaken.
- ⊙ The fog is often thick in this area. In it, movements and inexplicable ghost lights can be seen (*Mistwraiths*).
- ⊙ On the outskirts of the swamp towards *Wardenholt*, many of the frozen dead are missing their skulls.

# THE ICE WURM

- ⊙ A 100 feet long snake-like creature, thick as the waist of a human.
- ⊙ Her scales are snow-white, her head is long and pointed, and she has long barbels by her mouth.
- ⊙ She lies resting beneath the clear ice of *Frostmire*. Only the snout is above water.
- ⊙ She is curled around the rowboat in the middle of the swamp, guarding the treasure within it.
- ⊙ If she breaks loose from the ice, her whole body will be covered by an armor of ice.

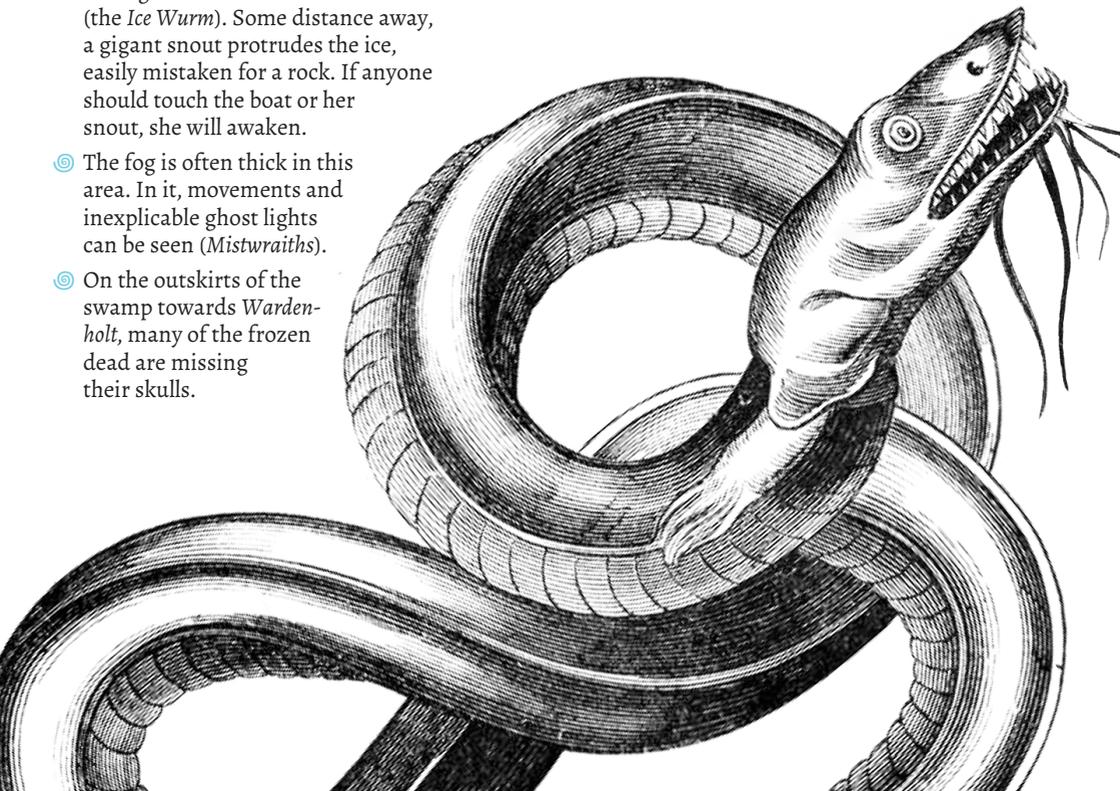
**Motive:** To find a new resting place in *Wardenholt*.

**Desire:** To banish the *Keeper of the Woods* from *Wardenholt* so that she may rest in peace there.

**Reward:** The treasure in the rowboat. As a bonus, destroying the *Keeper of the Woods* will also lift the curse over *Northwyr*. The wildlife will remain sickly however, and within a couple of years all wildlife will disappear from the forest.

**HP 27 Morale 10 Ice/scales -d6 Fangs/frost breath d8**

**Special:** 30% risk she breathes frost. Test Agility DR14 to avoid being frozen for d6 rounds.



# The Ossuary

- ☠ Located on the outskirts of *Wardenholt*, towards *Frostmire*.
- ☠ The walls of the subterranean chamber are covered in skulls and bones, cemented by clay.
- ☠ The place is covered in tracks from the *Hellhound*.
- ☠ Within the chamber, several ghoulish sculptures stand about, made out of mud and bones.
- ☠ Clusters of skulls hang in ropes from the ceiling.
- ☠ A giant's skull, covered with carvings in minute detail, sits in the center of the chamber. Its vertex is flattened into a tabletop. On it lies a *Cursed Artifact*.



## The Hellhound

- ☠ The *Skull Collector's* pet, who fetches skulls and bones for him at night.
- ☠ A grotesque demonic beast from the Underworld. Its head is flayed to the bone, and its huge maw is full of crooked fangs.
- ☠ If the *Hellhound* is destroyed, the *Skull Collector* will begin to stalk them.

HP 20 Morale 9 Claws/fangs d6

**Special:** Consumes souls. Presence DR8 when you take damage, or lose 1 Presence permanently.

## The Skull Collector

- ☠ The *Ossuary* is home to the *Skull Collector*, a troll several hundred years old.
- ☠ His posture is crouching and his limbs and fingers are long and sinewy.
- ☠ He is clothed in animal skins, wears a crude necklace made out of human skulls, and bracelets made out of bones.
- ☠ The skulls around his neck (and the giant skull in the middle of the room) are the remains of famous historical figures who died in the war (see *The Skull Collection* below). He loves to talk about them.

**Motive:** To have a complete collection of skulls.

**Desire:** To kill the *Ice Wurm* and have her severed head brought back to him.

**Reward:** A *Cursed Artifact*, and the promise to banish the *Hellhound* back to the Underworld (as its purpose is then fulfilled).

HP 28 Morale 7 Hardened skin -d2

Jaw bone club d10

## The Skull Collection

- ☠ **Varbackolar:** The greatest champion of the mountain giants. She defeated hundreds of the invading warriors during the battle, before she was betrayed by *Jodur Nightfox* (who slew her with the *Soul Quencher*).
- ☠ **Lodvar Greengarb:** The warlord from the South. He fought at the front lines of every victorious battle. The night before the battle at Northwyr, he was poisoned by *Yngvild the Rootless*. His most prized possession, his sword (the *Winterblade*), was forged in the South where the most accomplished blacksmiths in the world reside.
- ☠ **Guttorm the White:** The wisest among the chieftains of the North—the one who united the tribes and commanded the resistance forces in the war with the invading army. He bravely rode into his final battle with mighty horn blasts (from the *Chieftain's Horn*) emboldening his warriors.
- ☠ **Jodur Nightfox:** The traitor. He was the chieftain who chose to abandon the resistance and secretly ally himself with the Southern army. He had already gained a bad reputation as a sorcerer and practitioner of forbidden magic. He was also known for wearing expensive clothing and jewellery (for example the *Sorcerer's Collar*).
- ☠ **Yngvild the Rootless:** The freedom fighter who used ambushes and hit-and-run tactics to hinder the invading forces. Thanks to her, the Southern army was weakened when it reached Northwyr. Her role in the war was far greater than what the old tales would have you believe. But there are still those who tell stories of how her distinctive helmet (the *Oracle's Head*) terrified her enemies during the nightly raids.

## d6 Random Encounters

- 1 d3 Mistwraiths (just use *wraiths*)
- 2 d6 Bone Terrors (just use *blood-drenched skeletons*)
- 3 d6 Gravestalkers (just use *zombies*)
- 4 The *Hellhound*
- 5 d6 flocks of Carrion Crows (**HP 24, Morale 6, Beaks/claws d4**)

Sickly Wildlife. Roll d6 for each column:

- |            |                 |               |                       |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| A...       | ...grotesque... | ...wolves...  | ...acting aggressive  |
| Two...     | ...starving...  | ...boars...   | ...being intrusive    |
| 6 Three... | ...scabby...    | ...bears...   | ...being apprehensive |
| Four...    | ...misshapen... | ...elks...    | ...acting cautious    |
| Five...    | ...bloated...   | ...deer...    | ...being evasive      |
| Six...     | ...flayed...    | ...bobcats... | ...being dead         |

## d6 Cursed Artifacts

- 1 **The Winterblade.** A broadsword entirely made of steel. The sword is always cold to the touch. Even if you wear gloves, your fingers go numb in ten minutes. If you continue to hold it, your fingers will stiffen and finally freeze stuck to the handle in half an hour. Blood never sticks to the blade.
- 2 **The Oracle's Head.** An ornamented full helmet with a visor in the shape of a woman's face. When you look through the eye holes of the visor you can see the Spirit Realm—but the spirits there can look back into your soul, haunting you with ghostly visions.
- 3 **Ring of Necrotic Strength.** A simple ring of shining gold. Wearing it gives you superhuman strength in the arm which you put it on (+3 to Strength rolls). However, the skin below the ring turns completely pale in an hour, and starts to chafe and wither like ash. Unless the skin is allowed a week to recover, the finger will start to wither completely.
- 4 **The Sorcerer's Collar.** A heavy-weight collar cast in bronze. When you put it on, you can hear the voices of the souls in the Spirit Realm. When the collar is put in place, it can't be removed until a whole day and night has passed.
- 5 **The Soul Quencher.** A masterfully crafted silver spear. The shaft is seemingly unaffected by the ravages of time. If the spear touches an undead being, its soul is quenched forever—but for every soul you quench, you lose a memory dear to you.
- 6 **The Chieftain's Horn.** A grand bugle with golden ornaments. Its tone is deep and profound, and can be heard from many miles away. It effectively scares off predators, disperses mist and repels the undead. The following night however, you are haunted by nightmares depicting your own death.