

Session 8
Saturday, 26th July 2008
Present: Joel, Julius & Fred

Cross bridge
Sheep/Boat
Pursuit to Wolfenburg
Fate point
Football match
Khorne worshipper

Tattoos - Part 8

Somehwere around 14th/15th of Vorgeheim.

Let's see...where was I?

Oh, yeah...just about to cross the bridge on the way out of Ristedt. So, this is the third bridge that we'd have had to cross, right? The first out of Wolfenburg, and the second to get to Ristedt, yeah? So how come all of a sudden the pilgrims are all stirred up, and jabbering about the saint not wanting to cross water? I can tell when someone's been spreading rumours...it's something I'm good at, and this situation reeks of it now. If I didn't know better I'd say that this pilgrimage was composed of nothing more than factions that wanted this trip to fail, but who were blissfully unaware that everyone else was wanting the exact same thing. Later I'll try spreading some counter rumours. So Dwarf 2 gets up on the Sarcophagus cart, and tries talking some sense into them. He forgets he's talking to a bunch of desperate yokels (and artefact thieves) who're following some mouldy old bones across country, in the hope that...Well...Sigmar only knows. No space for sense in those heads. Fortunately, I've moved into the crowd, and instead target their hopes.

"It's a sign!" I yell. Quite convincingly too...they'll just need another little nudge. "The bones are rocking!...The Saint's displeased!" Of course they're bloody rocking...the crowd was mobbing the bloody cart, but like I said...no space for sense in those heads. They calm down enough for the guards to restore order, and we're on our way. And...for a while...it looks like things are going well. Dwarf 2 gets up on the bone cart and evil eyes anyone that comes anywhere near it, I get to sit on the repair cart and chat to Danuti, it's all going smoothly, but then...the sheep come. Did that sound as ridiculous to you as it did to me? Well, it was sheep that started it either way. Some shepherds "just happened" to be driving a whole bunch of sheep up the road the opposite way to us. Around the same time I notice that a boat's tailing us. It's heading down stream, but moving slower than the carts.

Something caught in the steering gear they claim. Well, it's stinks of a set up, but unfortunately I doubt we're licensed for pre-emptive strikes. So I keep my eye on the approaching shepherds, and Dwarf 2 keeps an eye on the boat people, and there are sheep everywhere, and people are shouting and fussing and every cart, ox, man, woman, and horse are getting barged all over the place.

Good master dwarf and I get up on the repairs cart, so as not to be swamped by sheep, and I don't really see where the others get to. What I DO see however is 4 "pilgrims" getting up on the Bone cart, "To Stabilize It". I know what you're thinking. How on Earth did such a misleading thought get into my head? Truth be told, I can't say why I'd think such a thing. It's not like they could've said so. Even I couldn't make myself heard over that din, and I have a fine Public Speaking voice. Maybe it was the will of the Saint that things turned out this way, and it was him that put such a thought in my head. Yeah...stop smirking. Anyway, I at least have the sense to be a little suspicious, and I check to convince myself that they were making it MORE stable, rather than less so, and they proved themselves to be MASTERS of deception by leaving me clueless...and you have to wake up pretty early in the morning to...

Ahem...You done smirking yet?

So believe it or not they lift the lid on the Sarcophagus, whip out the bones, and make a dash for the boat. I let out a cry, but no-one hears, cares, or is in a position to do anything except my good self and Boris. Grossbart charges off after them, and I start laying down some crossbow fire. I must be getting better as shot one drops the Tiller man stone dead. I wish those things didn't take so long to reload. I'm seriously thinking of switching to a Bow. Anyhow, that gets me too cocky, and my shots aren't much use after that. Boris isn't having any luck either, getting ktfo.

The boat pulls away with Boris still on it! The horsemen finally get their act together and start galloping up the road alongside the river, and I flag down another boat. A little time playing up the urgency, and downplaying the talk of reward, and I'm soon getting to say "Follow that boat!" We're keeping with them, but they call out threatening to dump the dwarf overboard, and dressed as he is, he'll sink like a stone. Still, dressed as he is, his armour would fetch a few tidy crowns if we could fish it out again, and that encourages me to...ahh... try and bluff them. "And?" says I. It doesn't work. My virtue and nobility must be obvious to them.

They realise I...er...wouldn't let a friend die, and call my bluff. Still, I try offering them double what they're being paid to stop, but that's just ignored, which makes me think they were zealots. We break off the chase and I return to the road. Now even though it would seem that only Seth made it onto the boat with me, it literally never occurred to me that we wouldn't make a proper effort to retrieve the bones, so, off we set on the road back to Wolfenburg. However, middle of the night, I awake with an uneasy feeling that we're being watched. Well, I say we...the weasily little shit's obviously had the same feeling and fled without waking me. Maybe that's too harsh...maybe it was just luck. Maybe he got up for a piss in the night and just found a particularly attractive tree to hug.

Either way I'm completely alone with no idea what's out there. It could be Lions or Tigers, or maybe even Bears. Oh My. I decide to hide up a tree, but maybe just Fleeing for all I was worth would've been a better bet. It turns out it's 4 bandits. I see them off, and start to...

Okay, okay.

So, they shoot me in the HEAD, and were apparently about to loot my body when Fate smiles and one of the Ritter's horsemen, who was returning to check that the rest of the caravan is under control, interrupts. HE drives them off just in time, and after explaining that I was trying to catch up with them to help retrieve the stolen bones, we head back to the caravan. Soon everyone's back. Dwarf 1 and Friedrich show up with some evil looking hounds. Dwarf 2 has made his way back on his own. He found himself back in Wolfenburg, and was released upon giving his parole. I guess being a Dwarf counts for something, eh? It was about then that the Sarcophagus exploded. I kid ye not. The others now think we should get out of there. The Ristedt Football team is on it's way to Vordt, which is in the right sort of direction, and may offer some opportunities for excitement and entertainment.

Something like a third of the team got "mysteriously" struck down with some kind of food poisoning, so they'll be needing some help one way or another. I liked the idea too, but thought that there was unfinished business at the caravan first. It was pretty obvious to me that if we didn't uncover a guilty party, then there'd be someone pointing fingers and making US the scapegoat. That sort of thing could really come back to bite you in the ass. The others didn't seem to mind, but for me it always rankles when someone puts one over on you like that, and besides, I could do without this first blemish on my otherwise spotless record. I thought that the Sergeant was the likeliest candidate. It seemed to me that he'd hired people that would (in his opinion) be most likely to help the trip fail.

No-one else was taking though, and I still have a bruised head that tells me that going it alone isn't my best option, so we head off. I heard a rumour that soon after we left there was an attack in the night that slaughtered the camp. I hope there was no truth in that. Or if there is, I hope at least that Danuti escaped. As we're getting closer to Vordt the local gossip drifts in. We notice Templars searching the banks of the river. Turns out some local girls have gone missing over a series of nights. Before we got here thankfully, or we'd be getting harsh stares. I later dig up that one was found floating downstream. They were all thought to be good, pure young ladies, but that one I heard wasn't quite so pure.

In completely unrelated gossip we hear that the local Meister died recently, and a new one has turned up to replace him. By remarkable coincidence he is very fond of football. And brought some players with him. And this all happened just before the big match. Shallya's tit! Are these people blind? Still, if things run well (and not too many local virgins disappear) the simple folk probably don't much care who's in charge. The thought of finally putting one over on the Ostlanders probably doesn't hurt either. With so many members of the team still suffering from poisoning, the Ostland team are in need of help, so the Dwarves and I see about volunteering. They seem overjoyed to see the sturdy Dwarves, and are so desperate that they'll even grudgingly let me play. It doesn't go so well at first. I'm fairly sure I've not played this game before... Yes, you would think it's the sort of thing I'd remember wouldn't you... and I don't think the Dwarves have either, so it takes a while to get our bearings, and the rest of the team seem kind of demoralized, as they don't really seem to be making much of a contribution. We soon get that hang of it, but not before we go 2-0 down. From then though we're storming it. We pull level, and then into the lead, our Dwarves scoring all 3. Boris got one, and he started in defense. I'm doing my bit, although where the Dwarves are able to apply their Strength and

Toughness, I rely more on my ability to run (away), moving the ball with Speed and Initiative. I even manage to successfully apply my Strength, such as it is, upon occasion.

Now though, things get a little dirty. The Meisters Ringers start pulling some wierd tricks. I guess it didn't help that one of the goals Volix scored also resulted in their Goalkeeper getting flattened. Volix comes out of a clash with a singed beard. I pull clear of a tackle, and a foot stretches out of nowhere to steal the ball. In the confusion they pull back, and then into the lead. By now Volix has been sent off for brawling. Yeah, he...er...he punched someone's head off. No...literally off...he punched a Ringer's head clean off. Personally I think he had a weaker neck because it could stretch, or maybe because he could breathe hellfire! I remember saying we should have a leg count to weed out any other mutations...well I didn't say it very loud, and not to the Ref, for fear of sounding mad, but as it turns out, it would have saved us some bother if I had. Anyway, despite our star goalscorer getting sent off, we weren't out of the game, because we still had me, and I had plenty of running away left in me. An inspired streak of fleeing took me past virtually their whole team, and a scorching shot beat the keeper. I'd brought us back level, and everything went black.

Coming to, I resolved never to perform the mocking dance to celebrate goals scored, were I ever to play this game again. Naturally, without my steadying influence on the world, violence had erupted. Some bright spark had realised that now that Ostland was no longer behind, the cup would be retained in the event of the match being halted. Apparently, a riot broke out almost as soon as that thought was made audible.

Now being a worldly sort, it occurred to me that this is exactly the sort of chaotic scene that some minds of a more criminal bent, would attempt to exploit. Someone could use the confusion to steal the cup. With this thought in mind I rushed to where the Fritz Avaheim cup was being guarded, but I'd been beaten to it! By which I mean of course, I was too late to protect it. Quickly assessing the situation I spy the (2) likely culprits retreating to the Meister's house. We were prevented from bringing any lethal weapons onto the playing field (I wanted a crossbow) so I's completely unarmed, but fortunately the 2 fallen guards each wielded sword and shield, so I fill my hands and rush off to save the day!

No, of course I don't...not in the literal, physical sense. I'm simply not blessed with the gift of combat, and despite what the ladies might say about my prowess and stamina, I'm not particularly Tough nor Strong neither, especially on those occasions where I've just recently been trampled into unconsciousness. Fortunately I know two Dwarves that really do like to fight. I drag them away from the assault on the Football loving population of Vordt, arm them, and point out the direction of some genuine wrong 'uns. This however, once again, leaves me unarmed.

Now there are those that say that there is nothing more useful in a combat situation than a beat up, unarmed Raconteur. They are of course quite mad. What would I have done? Tickled them into submission? Given them a stern telling off, and convinced them to reform? Distracted them by bleeding on them? (Those stains can be hell to wash out) I'd much rather have some Templars to help me out and I knew just where I could find some. Employing again my talent for running, followed closely by my talent for persuasion, I

manage to get some to accompany me to "save" the Meister from the thieving Bandits who stole the Cup, and chased him into his house...No, I didn't believe that, but I thought that it was the best way to get them to follow.

Saying "Your new Meister is a cheating, thieving, poisonous, murderer, who employs Mutant Ringers, and probably kidnaps young girls for Virgin Sacrifice" wouldn't have had the same impact. Oh, there'd have been an impact all right, but not one I'd have liked. By the time I get there with reinforcements, I've pretty much missed it all. They'd had one hell of a fight. Down in the basement the Meister had his own little worshipping area, complete with trussed up Virgin Girls, and the whole "Blood For The Blood God" motif. Apparently he had some demented plan for bleeding the girls into the FA cup, and drinking from it to empower himself. We were too late for one of them. Maybe if I'd come along I would have been able to do something after all, but I'm no more a medic than I am a fighter, so there's no point second guessing myself.

Before too long the villagers that had been rioting against the Dwarves just minutes before were hailing them as heroes. Well not straight away obviously. It wasn't too hard to persuade the Templars that my friends had done a good thing by killing their Meister and that 3 legged Football player. Employing again my talent with ropes, followed closely by my talent with girls (in ropes), it was fairly easy to get some corroboration from the surviving girl that they'd saved. I must say I felt the sting of jealousy when my Dwarven friends were being hailed as heroes.

I had been useful. Everyone always looks to the guys with swords, no-one ever considers the actions of the little guys. Well, okay...in this instance the guys with swords were Dwarves...pretty much a definition of "little guys", but you know what I meant. My input made the difference between a pair of Dwarves getting arrested for rioting and in-game murder, with the Meister getting away with his evil schemes, and the rather more positive alternative that we ended up with. Still...at least you, me, and...well...everyone else I get to tell the story to will know the truth, eh? And that is exactly how it happened, as concisely as I could put it.

Would I lie to you, officer?