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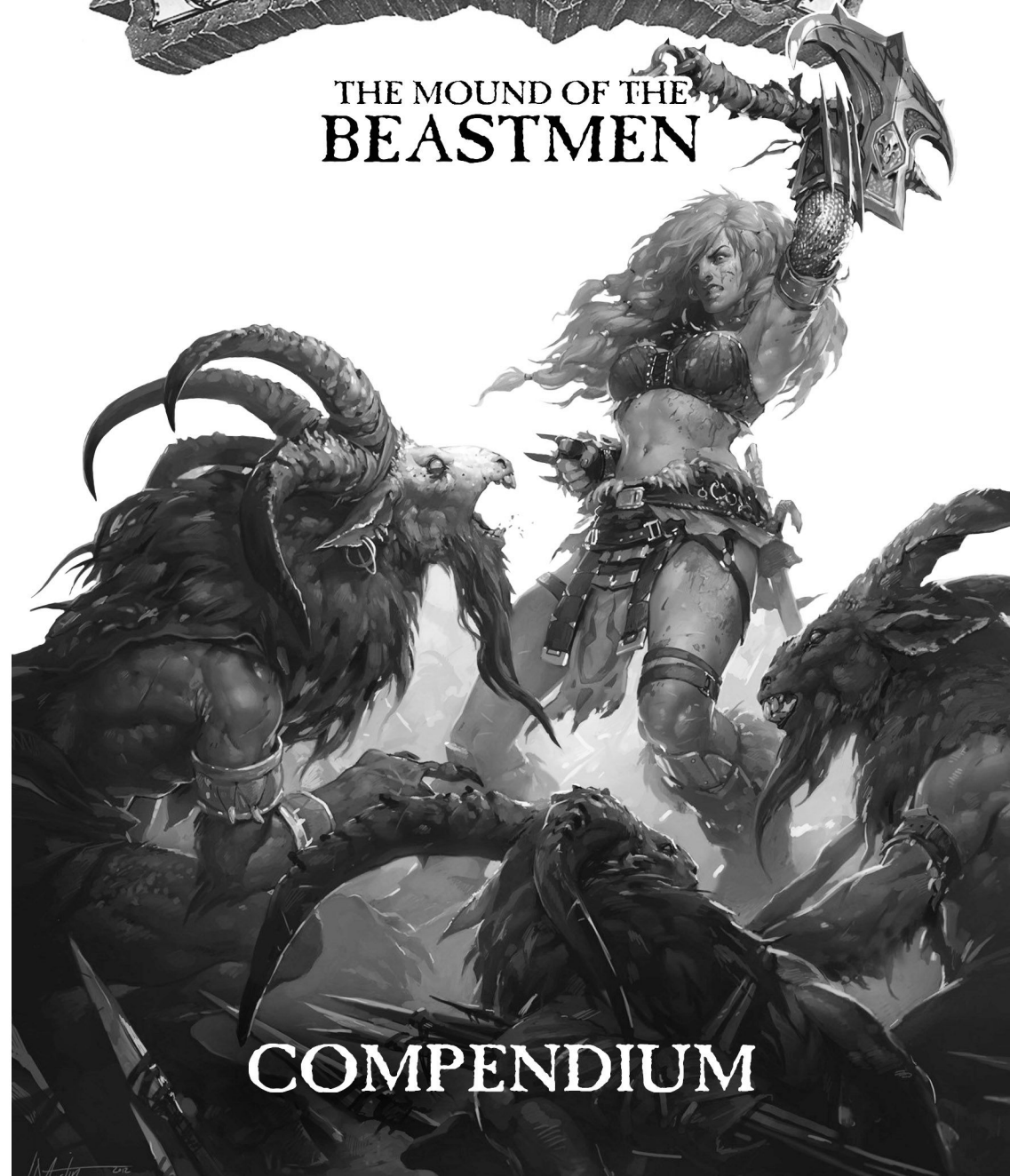


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THE MOUND OF THE
BEASTMEN



COMPENDIUM

4 *Read after you have laid out all contents of the room*
The full moon glares with white intensity, bathing the clearing in a pleasant warm light. You wipe away the blood of the killed spattered all over you before you join a small group of Imperial soldiers at the edge of the forest. In the middle of the clearing, you notice a great number of ugly shapes in which pairs of eyes gleam, contrasting with the deceptive darkness. The men around you are dead tired, but you also know that they will be more than ready to do battle to their last breath once more for the Empire to prevail. Besides, these last remaining forces of Morcar are still blocking the access to that ancient mausoleum for a good reason, to be sure. So you grasp the handles of your weapons firmly, whereas a fresh breeze is carrying by the smell of death. The outcome of this final conflict is in your hands now.

5 *Read after you have laid out all contents of the room*
You open this impressive wooden door, the sound of which easily fills the ancient mausoleum. This place is sinister, lightened just a little through a small crack up in the dome supported by majestic pillars of stone. Long fissures in the decaying walls and large piles of rubble are both relics and witnesses to the ravages of different times. Yet, over there in a small circular vestibule, someone is at work. A shadow shape looming large and noble. You recognize Sir Vardion. However, in his glance, something has changed. He regards you with hatred and contempt alike. In his hand, the Black Stone stirs as if having a heartbeat of its own, each pulse apparently shattering Sir Vardion's soul. Without a word, he lifts his sword and affronts you, his mouth contorted with rage.



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The Shadow of the Renegade



1 *Read after you have laid out all contents of the room*
Sir Vardion patiently awaits you, sitting in the centre of this room, with a dainty smile on his lips. After praising you for your efforts, he briefly reports his perils in the mound of the Beastmen, of his abduction after the marauding of the trail, and of his escape from these subterranean dungeons. On Mentor's order, he returned for joining you in protecting the Black Stone and taking it back to the wizards of the Empire. Reservedly, you reach that little jewel to him, and he admires it for a long moment before letting it slide into a leather pouch. Above ground, the battle against Morcar's forces has already begun, and Sir Vardion draws his famous Imperial greatsword, leading you on the march toward the final conflict.

2 *Read after the last hero has passed the square marked X.*
You take one step at a time through the narrow hallway. Its low ceiling and the stale stench aggrrieve you so heavily that you must walk bent over. Behind you, Sir Vardion can barely keep up in his plate armour, trying desperately to not get lost out of your sight in these cramped confines. Suddenly, you are violently thrown forward and enveloped in a cloud of dust and debris. A deep drone in your ears follows the blast and, coughing up dirt, you try to make out what has happened. Few yards back, a chaotic cluster of rocks clogs the corridor tightly shut, and no trace of Sir Vardion is to be found this side. Yet from beyond the rubble you can just hear his voice. Though unharmed, he cannot rejoin you anymore as the path is utterly blocked. He suggests you continue through this hallway while he will try to find another way upward to the surface. After many wishes for good luck, the dead cold silence takes back the rule over these forsaken barrow hallways.

3 *Read after you have laid out all contents of the room*
Pushing open the small wooden door, you enter a strangely empty chamber. You sheath your weapons and start searching the place meticulously. Suddenly, all the other doors slam open and spit out enraged animal packs encircling you from three sides. Of course, they must have been lying in ambush, armed to engage you. Squeezing through shaggy Beastman legs, a Goblin emerges, introduces himself as Bongo, and regards you with a shoddy laugh, whereupon his troops join in to blare and bray.

HERO QUEST™

COMPENDIUM

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The Forest of Shadows



1 ***Read after you have laid out all contents of the room***
You break through into a dark grove. The creepy cold and spine-chilling night sounds reigning here do nothing to assure you, so you tread these paths very carefully. All of a sudden, a cry of dread ripples this morbid tranquillity. In secrecy, you approach the source of that scream, meandering through the trunks of gnarled trees until you find an injured Imperial Guardsman desperately fighting off two Goblin Brigands.

Read after both Goblin Brigands have been defeated
The Imperial Guardsman, breathlessly wheezing, explains to you that he has survived the assault on the trail by feigning death. After the creatures had left, he looked to search the battlefield for other survivors, but suddenly was confronted with the Goblin Brigands come to graze the sparse remains of the trail and that he was quickly brought to bay between the trees. He then tells you there must be other survivors hiding scattered in the woods and that he must continue his search.

2 ***Read after you have laid out all contents of the room***
You find yourselves in a glade lit partially by the pale yellow light of the full moon. A thin azure haze wavers gently over the floors, lending its enchanting aura to the clearing. A monolith of solid stone, dressed with skulls and bones, emerges from the soil. Just as you are examining this strange pillar and conclude it must be a water well, the ground begins to swarm alive around your feet. With an otherworldly clatter, the earth beneath you retches and spits out piles and tides of decrepit skulls and bones. You now must face a fearsome host of Skeletons!

3 ***Read after you have laid out all contents of the room***
You push and shove aside thin branches full of leaves to find a hidden door of stone. Although locked and sealed, it does not resist your efforts for long before it budes open. You enter a gloomy room that contains, to your fondness, the ancient tomb of a renowned warrior from time immemorial. At its sides, two upright caskets have been sculpted in the walls. Almost unavoidably, your very presence has disturbed this place's peace and the caskets start to stir. Two Skeletons free themselves from within, humourless grins and sightless sockets fixed on you.

4 ***Read after you have laid out all contents of the room***
You push open the heavy wooden door and enter the room behind it. A reddish shimmer dances between the brick arches to the irregular patterns imposed by the monumental chandeliers, which are randomly composed of thrown together human bones. Over there, you notice an enormous figure that in spite of its monstrous size moves with a lightness that is very suspicious. The monster has oxen-like features and is twice as tall as a man. Worse, it seems to wield its huge twin axes as if they were merely tiny twigs. Behind it, it drags the dead remains of an Imperial soldier. Glaring in your direction, it appears to be losing interest in its victim. Indeed, the lot of you would suffice to quench a Beastlord's voracity much better... and that is precisely what you are realizing right now.



To the Surface



1 **Read when the first hero searches for treasure**
You thoroughly rummage through every nook and cranny of the room for items of even the smallest value. Only when you tilt some loosened tiles, a tiny library is displayed. And when you sweep through a shelf, one of these crimson grimoires falling opens to reveal sort of a tiny egg-shaped jewel that was hidden between cover and lining. This honed stone is gleaming in your palm and seems filled with an odd reddish liquid. Maybe, just maybe, this might be worth some gold, so you let it slide inside your pocket.

2 **Read after you have laid out all contents of the room**
Just as you are preparing to open the wooden door in front of you, drawn out roars of fury startle you, accompanied by a cacophonous clang of arms. Through the noise, you recognize human voices that sound almost familiar. Yet, you pluck up the courage to open the door... a veritable outburst of rage and rampage! In front of you, a handful of Imperial soldiers battle some Beastmen. Identifying your old companions, you throw yourselves into the mettle on their side.

3 **Read after all enemies in the room are defeated, but only if at least one Man-at-arms is still alive.**
One of the guardsmen holds his shoulder, trying to stop the thin river of blood running down his arm. While you are bandaging his wound, he tells you how he and a small group of survivors managed to slip out of the dirty dungeons of the Butcher. Soon after their escape, they found themselves confined between two doors. The guard then tells you that Sir Vardion somehow escaped the barrow-mound altogether and is planning to conquer it from the outside. You must make haste to escape and take part in the attack to take the Black Stone to safety.

Read when the first hero searches for treasure
Deep in a corner, you discover a small dusted library. Thoroughly examining the books therein, your hand feels a Rune of Blood hidden underneath a book cover. Proud of your lucky find, you slide it gently in your pocket.

4 **Read after you have laid out all contents of the room**
Before you, you discover a decrepit door of moulded wood, and under it you can see a warm light pulsing. Listening in vain for treacherous sounds, you open the door just a gap, causing its rusted hinges to creak and groan. Belatedly, you realize that three pairs of eyes are glaring at you from the other end of the room. A bulky figure, part human, part bestial, holds fast on chains a pair of enormous Chaosounds barking savagely at you. Surprised by your presence, the Beastman slavers and bellows before he lets the hounds loose.

Read after all the monsters of this room have been defeated
You watch the bloody creature lying at your feet. Its presence in the vast tomb rather flabbergasts you, as the Beastmen are not known to thrive in such confined spaces. An old door in the opposite side of the room arouses your curiosity, and you wonder why of all things this particular door was guarded so well. Of course, there is no other way left out of the Forest of Shadows as the path back is now forever blocked by the cave-in caused by yourselves. So you hold on tightly to your weapon handles and hesitantly push this mysterious door open...



The Forgotten Crypts



1 Read as soon as the first Hero moves through this secret door into the corridor

You skulk around searching for secret doors until you step onto a loosened stone floor tile and push it aside under some strain. The secret door opens into a dark depressing corridor. Not a soul can live here, yet down there, at the end of the hallway, there is this feeble light that seems alive. A menacing light that is blossoming in size and slowly closing in on where you stand.

2 Read after you have laid out all contents of the room

You enter a chamber that looks much like a mortuary. As you examine the dark and dusty room, the lid of the tomb built into the wall starts to tremble and then slowly slides open. First you see just one decayed hand, but then a long-dead knight climbs clumsily out of his tomb. Meeting your gaze, he snarls at you.

3 Read when the first Hero wants to open this door

This door is obviously bolted and will not budge. From the other side, you hear coarse yelling. Between two mouldy boards, a narrow gap reveals a very unnatural scene: an enormous vault basked in warm, if not homely, light. In its centre, some Beastmen encircle a Shaman who appears to be dedicated to a strange sacred item. And suddenly, you understand... this must be the purloined Black Stone, perfectly shaped, indecipherably inscribed. That artefact that could radically change the course of the war. Cold shivers run down your spines when you realize these corpses piled on the vault's floor – your fallen companions – have been sacrificed on the altar! The banging of a door behind you startles you up and the clatter of hooves on stone tiles announce the arrival of one more trouble...

4 Read when the first Hero steps through this exit door (end of the quest)

You climb over the cadaver of the Beastman guard whose warm blood is pouring out in the cold crypt corridor. The key you hold in your hand finally allows you to leave these accursed grounds where you have already spent too much time. Determinedly, you slide the key into the rusty lock. The door's opening mechanism announces itself with a metallic clicking that fills these forgotten crypts even down to their deepest depths.

4 Read after Vivigor has been killed (end of the quest)

When he is dropping to the floor in a morbidly grotesque pose, Vivigor's lifeless stare stays fixed on you. From his open mouth a liquid drips that you first think to be fresh blood, but then it proves much too dark and oily for that. The black substance runs meandering through the cracks and crevices in the floor tiles, just to disappear mysteriously in one particular gap. But at this point you cannot be surprised any more, so you pull yourselves together and gingerly push apart the deceased Shaman's fingers with the tips of your blades to free the little Black Stone they are still clasp tightly. It seems coined by a force unknown and a muffled deep humming emanating from it just peeks your curiosity. Breaking your concentration, the roaring and blaring of Vivigor's guard reaches your ears, and you realize that unfortunately your troubles are not done yet by a long shot.



Halls of Evil



1 ***Read after you have laid out all contents of the room***
You discover a large room filled with a pale blue shimmer that imposes the impression you do not belong here. There is nothing but this vivid mist that is slowly spinning in a delicate spiral pattern all across the room. Upon contact with any of you, it is sidetracked and swathes you for close inspection, then withdraws giving away an almost dismissive air. When you proceed through the room, you realize that that wisp, in places, takes the form of human faces disfigured from the torture of their spirits. These souls in pain have obviously been entrapped here for eternities, and you suppose that further troubling this vintage place would condemn your own souls to be welcomed as everlasting guests in the Hall of the Forgotten.

2 ***Read after you have laid out all contents of the room***
A fine whiff of chilly air is flowing through the grooves in the door you face. All senses alert, you gently push it open, ready to face worse danger. The room you enter fumbling around is plunged in utter darkness and even the torch lights from the corridor behind you cannot enlighten a single square foot of the impenetrable gloom. You worry that maleficent black magic could be the source of these unnatural shadows, and yet there is no other way to choose than delving further into the depths of the Halls of the Blind.

3 ***Read after you have laid out all contents of the room***
You place the rune in the star-shaped depression. In a flurry of tiny vivid lights, the door revolves to reveal a hall that appears to be weighed down by its own domes and arches. All sorts of manuscripts and parchments are strewn all over its floor and stuck to its granite walls. Amid this disorder lingers Vivigor the Shaman who, curiously, seems to have quite some trouble breathing. His eyes are bloodshot and under his filthy garments you notice several monstrous outgrowths. At his feet lie mauled and shredded beastman corpses in whose sallow faces you can still see the sheer surprise of horror. The Shaman holds on tight to the Black Stone in his hands, gleaming like an unknown molten metal. With a sepulchral voice, he draws out his complaint, as if begging for your aid, but his madness soon regains the upper hand, so he announces his irrevocable decision to end this chapter of your miserable lives.

In Search of the Black Stone



1 *Read after you have laid out all contents of the room*
The decayed door offers no resistance whatsoever. You step over its debris and enter a dark damp den reeking of mould. Quickly you spot human cadavers covering the floor in morbid disorder. In one corner of the room, you notice a haggard figure, face to the wall, trembling with weakness and wheezing broken moans. When it senses your presence, the creature slowly turns its head toward you, staring into space with dead yellowed eyes. It seems to be alive and yet not living. Of course it does not care itself for such questions and advances, lurching toward you, drooling and groaning.

2 *Read after you have laid out all contents of the room*
You open the cell door just a gap and the infectious stench of a beast's bedstead wreaks havoc on your noses. Sitting there, on a bale of straw, you recognize one of your unfortunate men-at-arms. He explains to you how, after the attack on the trail, he and other survivors were captured and carried off to these disgusting dungeons. Since then, the Beastmen, led by a cruel Shaman named Vivigor, never quit torturing them hustling for information about the Black Stone. Though Sir Vardion had been among the prisoners, he was carried off to a different part of the mound. The man-at-arms walks up to the weapon rack and helps himself to his equipment. Together, you press on to find Vivigor the Shaman, who will be ferociously guarding the little relic in his den.

3 *Read after you have laid out all contents of the room*
After you have passed a door smeared all over with drying blood, a veritable vision of horror manifests in front of you. Bleeding bodies hang from rusty meat hooks, flushing the floor, and dismembered human body parts lay piled up in a corner. Disgust reigns in this room with swarms of insects feasting and buzzing about frenetically. In the middle of this butchery, this monster fortifies itself in the carnage. It seems enraptured by your sight and a fight in view, judging from its freshly sharpened cleaver blade pointing in your direction.

4 *Read after you have laid out all contents of the room*
You enter a room that looks like a study, well-illuminated by many candles scattered about. You see strange symbols engraved into the walls and banners with ornaments and inscriptions in a dark tongue unknown to you. Desks overburdened and covered in grimoires and dubious concoctions round out the impression this place leaves on you. In a dark corner, a bovine shape stirs and advances wielding a heavy bone bludgeon. A leather bag dangles from its hips hiding something the shape of the Black Stone. You quickly understand: to retrieve it, you must battle the infamous Shaman, Vivigor.

R *Read after Vivigor is defeated (end of the quest)*
Vivigor finds himself driven back into a corner. His attacks are not as decisive as they were just seconds ago. Cautiously, you advance aiming your weapons at him from a short distance. Too late, you realize that he has one more heavy hit left in his hand: with a surprisingly quick gesture, he hurls a glass orb at the floor at your feet. The white powder that is released inflames on contact with the air, causing a dazzling explosion of blinding light. In searing pain you try to cover your eyes. Although it seems to take a lifetime, it allows the insidious shaman just the chance to activate a candleholder that reveals a hidden staircase. Vivigor's horned silhouette disappears into the darkness underground, his roaring laughter gradually deadened by the unholy depths. Once your vision has returned, you tumble toward the secret passage... No, in as much pain as you are, you cannot deal with this just now.

