

LAIR OF THE RAT

by Gary James and Brandon Hicks



Here is another excellent offering from Gary James' website. This is a special scenario for 3 players, which pits two gangs against the forces of the Ratlord controlled by a referee. The Ratlord also appears in the Warhammer Monthly's the Redeemer strip, as part of the the Callers heinous plot to destroy Hive Primus. We've included some of the illustrations from that strip for reference if you feel inspired to convert your own Ratlord, which would make a nice modelling project. Failing that the Skaven Vermin Lord model would make a suitable stand-in.

The place was very special. No-one had dared to defile this, the most holy of places, for many generations. The last group had been drawn by greed, greed for sacred archeotech, greed for rare animal pelts and wildsnake. Now they were coming again. He could feel the fall of their clumsy feet and smell their fear. Of what were they afraid? Of the vermin, scuttling through this darkest of corners in the underhive. Heb. If it is vermin they want, then vermin they will get. But these will be the vermin of their worst nightmares.

Laremeth took his staff and rapped in the filth of the dusty floor. Three giant rats emerged from the surrounding infrastructure, their eyes reflecting an evil but intelligent glint despite the darkness. He petted them and fed each a titbit. "We shall be needing a little help my friends," he rasped. "Go now, seek Him out and bring Him to me. Tell Him to hurry, for they are almost upon us". The emissaries turned and disappeared silently into the darkness. It had been a long time since he had had occasion to summon Him, and though the circumstances were regrettable Laremeth couldn't help but look forward to seeing Him again. He was as close to family as he could hope to get.

The Beastmaster's fingers caressed the smooth, curved instrument stitched to the hem of his coat, and he reminisced. He had always had a way with animals. His parents had encouraged him initially, and when Laremeth discovered the Talking he had demonstrated with pride the exceptional control he could exert over his pets. His parents had been amused, then bemused, and then startled. This was too far from the Way to be good. He must stop it. The pets must go. It was for his own good, and they did it because they loved him, he knew that. But the Talking became stronger. It intruded into his everyday thoughts and he couldn't control it. He was drawing attention to himself, and worse, to his family. Eventually his family home had been besieged by mobs demanding that he be handed over to the Guilders for examination. His father had known the consequences of allowing this action, and he had been smuggled out through the mob by a family friend. He knew he would never return.

In the Underhive people had been less startled by his powers, and he had learned to keep them to himself when he could. Three days later Spike had turned up. It had been easy for the creature to track his master into the Underhive. All undampened Wyrds left a psychic wake in their path - the very atmosphere bristled with energy like iron filings standing on end when a magnet is applied. Unlike magnetic force, Wyrd psychics fell into six poles - one for each primary power. Beastmasters, having only a weak secondary power in addition to the Talking, produced a characteristic psy-print.

He had met an Elder, a fellow Wyrd, who taught him to hone and sharpen his talent. But the most powerful of these remained the Talking. This was unfortunate, because even Underbivers shied away from the vermin and other creatures which were all that could pass as 'pets' in this Emperor-forsaken place. And so Laremeth had pressed on deeper and deeper into the underhive. With only creatures as companions the Talking became an asset rather than a liability.

That is where he discovered this holy place, and the secret that he must protect. It was the most ancient of places, undetected by ordinaries for many many generations. It had created Him, and He must remain an even greater secret lest the witch hunt began once more and the pitiful creatures that passed for a family were again to be barded as a consequence of his powers.

Laremeth snapped himself out of his melancholy and back to the matter at hand. "Now then, Geheneth, are you close by too? Let's find out". Spike had been his most loyal beast and it had seemed fitting to carve his summoning flute from the rib of this, his favourite ward. He took it and made two shrill blasts which echoed far into the void like the shrieks of the dying rat. Now all he could do was wait...and keep an eye on their 'visitors'. There were two groups, he could sense that. Maybe they would be more powerful than the last, for a long time had passed. Lord help us. And Laremeth was sure that He would.

A disturbance in the back of Laremeth's mind announced the arrival of Geheneth, and he turned to greet his blood brother. "It has been some time, Beastmaster. What brings you back?"

Laremeth outlined the situation. Two gangs had wandered into the outskirts of the Sacred Place and he had been the first to sense it - possibly because the gangs were exterminating the hive vermin as they advanced, sending ripples of bestial angst through the underhive.

When he had first wandered into the sacred Ratskin enclave the Beastmaster had been observed quietly for several days without detection by even his fledgling psychic powers. The spirit of the shaman had walked with him many times before the Ratskins emerged. They recognised the potential worth of the Beastmaster and admired his control of the rats. Laremeth lived with them for a number of years and, gradually, their trust in him grew. Then the day arrived for the ritual. Deep within the ratskin territory lay an ancient and undisturbed archeotech hoard. And the hoard held a secret - a secret that the Ratskins hoped he would help them to exploit...

THE SCENARIO

Two rival gangs are exploring uncharted terrain when they discover each others presence. Because of the remote location, the area is crawling with wild beasts and mutant creatures. This scenario takes three people to play - two gangs and an arbitrator to control the Forces of the Ratlord.

Choosing this scenario

The stakes are high in this scenario - an archeotech hoard to the winners. Because of this we suggest this scenario should only be taken if the Gang Fight scenario is chosen and then a 6 is rolled on a further D6.

THE FORCES OF THE RATLORD

These consist of three characters and D3+3 Ratskin warriors.

Laremeth

Laremeth is a special character, but is basically a Beastmaster Wyrd who always has 3 rats to control - do not choose other creatures, and do not make a D3 roll for the number of rats. Choose his secondary power as normal. Laremeth is the leader of the Forces of the Ratlord and counts as having the Leader skill.

Geheneth

Geheneth is a Renegade Ratskin Shaman,



and takes the Shaman characteristics from Outlanders. In this scenario some of the Spirit Lore Powers would not make sense, so when rolling a power for Geheneth use this modified table: 1-2 Curse 3-4 Ghost Dance 5-6 Spirit Walk.

RATLORD

The Ratlord is a new special character introduced for this scenario. Use any model that seems appropriate - he is a mutant creature of (as yet) undisclosed origin. The Warhammer Fantasy Skaven Vermin Lord is a good choice.

Ratlord

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
5	6	0	5	5	2	3	1	8

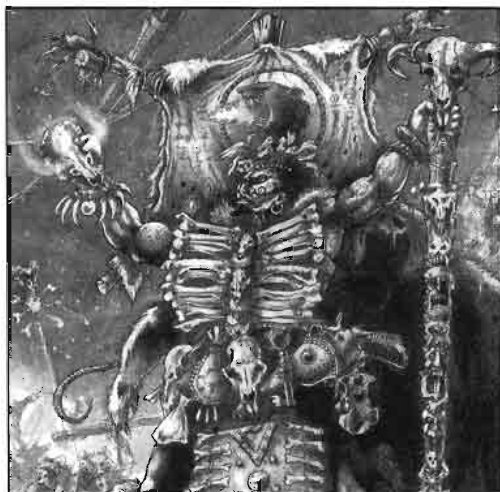
Skills: Killer reputation

Special: The Ratlord controls D3+3 giant rats in exactly the same manner as a Beastmaster, with the exception that there is no range limit on the control of the Ratlord's rats. The Ratlord cannot use weapons but has fearsome claws which have a strength of 5 and inflict D3 damage. He is immune to fear and terror. The Ratlord counts as a large target with a +1 to hit. For reference purposes, the Ratlord has a cost of 250 credits.

RATLORD RATS

These have the characteristics of Giant Rats from the Outlanders bestiary. The Ratlord always has his D3+3 rats available to him. If a Ratlord's rat is slain another will take its place. Place the replacement in base to





base contact with the Ratlord.

RATSKINS

The Forces of the Ratlord include D3+3 Ratskins. Generate these as for hired Ratskin Scouts.

SETUP

TERRAIN

The arbitrator sets up the terrain, since it is unknown to the gangers. The terrain should be set up on one or two levels with dense ground cover. Place the mine entrance piece near the centre and ensure there is cover for the Ratlord to move around in. As this is unknown terrain tunnel, vents and infiltration do not apply. The arbitrator selects a location where the Ratlord will emerge and makes a note of this on a piece of paper. The gangs are unaware of this location.

FORCES OF THE RATLORD SETUP

The Ratskins set up first in hiding, then the gangs, then the rest of the Ratlord's forces. The Ratlord emerges from hiding and can be placed on the terrain in a pre-designated spot at the beginning of any of the Ratlord Forces' turns. The Ratlord may not run in this turn.

GANG SETUP

The two exploring gangs are allowed to use half of the gang (rounding up) plus D3 members (the gangs have not taken the risk of leaving their territories unguarded when so far away). Note that, for a reason

unknown to the gangs, any Ratskin gang members slip away and are not available in this scenario. The gangs deploy within 4 inches of the table edge and roll a D6 to see who moves first. The Ratlord forces move last.

GAMEPLAY

The gangs are initially unaware of each other and cannot shoot or charge the opposing gang until they are aware of the other's presence. If a gang member comes within three times his own initiative in inches of an opposing gang member then he will notice the other gang and alert his companions. Shooting upon a gang will not necessarily alert them to the firer's presence...the shots could have come from an unknown source, such as the Ratskins. When a weapon is fired, the target gang rolls 2D6 and adds the weapon's strength to the score. If the score is over 10 the gang is made aware of their opponents shooting upon them.

ENDING THE GAME

Bottle tests need not be made until 50% are down or out of action. The game is over when both gangs have compulsorily or voluntarily bottled out or one gang has defeated the opposing gang and all the Forces of the Ratlord. The Forces of the Ratlord will never bottle out.

If a victorious gang has a ganger within running distance of the mine entrance at the point at which the game ends then the gang may add an archeotech hoard to its territory list.

EXPERIENCE

- +D6 for surviving the battle
- +2D6 for surviving a hand to hand encounter with the Ratlord himself
- +5 per wounding hit
- +10 for the gang member who inflicts a killing wound on the Ratlord. Note that this replaces the +5 for the wounding hit.