

# BRINKWOOD

THE BLOOD OF TYRANTS

**A GHOULISH FACTORY**

*A Module by Erik Bernhardt*

# INTRODUCTION

A defector who worked for the *Duke*, the Vampire lord of Cardenfell, has reached out to the **band** via intermediaries, hoping to secure safe passage in exchange for what he knows. He claims to have extensive knowledge of the means by which ghouls are produced, as well as information on the inner workings of the charnel houses where they are made.

On the night the party makes contact, a detachment of the **Forsworn**, the Duke's loyal henchmen have been sent to arrest the defector and drag him before the Duke, by force if necessary.

## VON ZELNER, THE DEFECTOR

Speaks in an affected german accent. A “man of science” who does not care deeply for the human condition.

*Under cover of darkness, you slip, quietly, through the gates of Grismont, a large town on the banks of the Cardenfell River. You move from shadow to shadow, under steepled roofs and overhanging bridges, past great halls of gothic stonework and smoke-belching factories of brick and ash.*

*Finally, you approach a quiet side street off a commercial busyway, and pad up a twist of wrought-iron steps to the address where you are meant to meet this defector.*

*After knocking three times quickly, two times slow, the heavy oak door creaks open, revealing a worn, bespectacled face with a curly mustache and thinning hair. The face peers out at you, and then shuts again, with the sound of bolts being unturned and chains clattering quickly follow. Again, the door opens, and your contact greets you.*

*“Come in, come in, willkommen, quickly now, schnell! Ze Duke’s men are everywhere. You were not followed, ja?”*

*Inside is a humble, one room parlor, decorated in a spartan fashion. A thin bed rests against the wall with a large trunk upon it, clothes spilling out. Against a nearby wall is a bookshelf, packed with beakers, jars, strange instruments and samples, and more than a few leather-bound journals. The defector hurries between the trunk and the shelf, occasionally pulling some garment out of the trunk, sniffing it, then discarding it in favor of shoving another trinket, bottle, or book into the trunk in its place.*

**If asked to tell what he knows:**

*Zere is no time. Ve must go, ja? You, over zere, hand me zat solution of nitrate! Achtung!, it iz how-you-say... volatile. Go boom. Ja?*

He can be convinced to tell them some of what he knows, but will be perpetually on edge. Once the players have talked to him for a bit, one of them should notice the arrival of the Forsworn.

## QUESTIONING VON ZELNER

**How do we Sabotage the Factory?**

Zere are many ways. Killing ze overseer, Garrigan vould likely hinder zem greatly. Destroying my notes and zee lab vill be essential as vell. Zere are a great many machines in ze factory, delicate for ze spanner in ze works, ja?

**What can you tell us about the Factory?**

Von Zilner tells the party anything they wish to know, but you shouldn’t let them get bogged down in the details. Remind them they can always flash back to this moment if they want more information once they’re actually in the factory.

### **How are ghouls made?**

It is und very complicated process. No time to explain fully, and you would not understand anyway. Unimportant. Suffice to zay, und man is drained of blood, ja? And zen infused with alchemicals, including ze blood sterling and un blood of zee vampire. But zat is primitive. Vell-known. Easy, child could do it. Not fit for a Doktor of my stature! I, I produced *greatness*.

### **What made your ghouls special?**

Ze typical ghoul is mindless, ja? Driven only by hunger, driven mad, difficult to control, unless by ze most blunt methods, only good for cannon fodder. But I discovered, zat ze thin concentrate of blood, mixed with... well, trade secret, ja? Could make ze ghouls calm. Reliable. Able to do simple tasks. Vork in factory. Ghoul does not need ze break, does not need ze sleep. Ghoul vill vork, until joints rot or ze limb is pulled off by factory machine... and zen vill try to keep vorking! Genius, ja?

### **That's horrible?**

No, no, you misunderstand. Ze... “basic” ghoul is in pain, in agony, ja? Constantly hunger for blood, for flesh. My ghouls are at peace. Zey do ze work. Zey do not suffer ze agony of ze bloodlust, ja? (*This is half-true*)

### **What aren't you telling us?**

Zey... zey are still ghouls, you understand. If zey get the smell of *bluder*, of blood, zey will go into ze frenzy. Regress. It is... und unfortunate limitation.

### **Can ghouls be turned back / can it be undone?**

Vat? Nein. No. Impossible. (*A lie*)

Really?

Vell... zere is no money in it. No profit. What would be ze point? But yes. I suppose, it eez theoretically possible. With enough time, I could figure out how to do it. But vhy would I bother with zat?

## THE FORSWORN

The **Forsworn** are the personal guard and army of the Duke. Loan-Bloods all, they are equipped with the finest armor and the sharpest swords the Duke can muster. Rumors persist of cruel experimentation, hidden behind black helmets and mechanical oculars, performed by the Duke's surgeons to make his soldiers loyal, unthinking, and unfeeling.

*Enforcer - Potency 1, Quality 1, Scale 0*

Due to their heavy armor and steel weapons, it is easier to run away from them than to fight. Evading them might be a Tier 1 4-clock, while fighting with them might involve a 4-clock "armor" segment and a 6-clock Foresworn segment.

## GHOULS

**Ghouls**, or "**ghuls**", are former folk, drained of all but a single drop of vampiric blood. They are the slaves, carrion-eaters, and underclass of Cardenfell. No one is quite clear where they come from, but some whisper that to be turned into a ghul is the fate of those who fail to make rent. They are typically not terribly dangerous, but in large numbers, or when driven to a frenzy by the sight or smell of blood, they can overwhelm even hardened soldiers.

# THE FACTORY

## **Overarching Danger: Reinforcements – 6 clock**

If the players kill guards or are noticed, the guards at the factory will eventually call for reinforcements from the *Forsworn* who attacked the players earlier.

## **FACTORY FLOOR**

*Manned by “domesticated” ghouls and a few guards patrolling catwalks above, the Factory Floor is a loud, hot place, filled with dangerous machines belching black smoke and stamping out new steel weapons for use in the Duke’s armies.*

## **OBSTACLES**

**Domesticated Ghouls** – Largely uninterested in the players, these are more an opportunity than a hazard. If a concoction of blood sterling is spilled (or any significant quantity of blood) the ghouls will begin to frenzy, attacking the guards. Each ghoul has a bottle of thin, reddish liquid hooked up to an IV drip strapped to their shoulder, which, if removed, will cause the ghoul to enter a frenzied state within an hour or so.

**Patrolling Guards** – Armed with long, hooked prongs (to fish the ghouls out of machinery they get stuck in) and rifles.

**Machinery** – Navigating the maze of machines without getting pulled into one is a danger in and of itself.

## PROCESSING

*A distinct chill permeates the air, along with the song of bubbling chemicals and the quiet whirr of machinery. A few technicians patrol rows of beakers, alembics, and tubules that pump a thin, watery, reddish liquid into glass bottles.*

**The Technicians** will attempt to flee and raise the alarm if they notice the party, leading to guards coming after them.

## HOLDING

*A dank row of prison cells holds the future victims of the Factory: men and women with hollow, sunken faces, in the process of having their blood slowly drained out of them. They will ask to be freed, and will raise a clamor if they feel the party is abandoning them.*

Across from the still-living prisoners is a holding-pen for ghouls that are either in need of repair or taken off the line for some reason.

## REPAIR SHOP

*Near the Holding area is the Repair Shop, which has a number of iron slates with manacles and chains where ghouls are strapped down and “repaired”. There are buckets of discarded limbs and smears of blood and ichor everywhere. Garrigan, the Overseer, is also here.*

## GARRIGAN, THE OVERSEER

A vampire loan-blood who oversees the operation of the Ghoul Factory. Sneering, contemptuous of his subordinates, and

greedy. He has a breastplate stretched over his massive torso, and carries a heavy, two-handed spiked mace wherever he goes.

Garrigan is interrogating one of his subordinates in the repair shop, demanding answers for the slowed rate of production.

**Garrigan:** These delays are unacceptable, Colfa. Why isn't the Processing room producing more ghouls?

**Colfa:** The formula is very exacting. We're not quite sure how Von Zelner stabilized the solution, his notes are incomplete-

**Garrigan:** Excuses! Von Zelner is dead, or will be soon enough. You'll likely see him working on the factory floor before too long. I recommend you work *faster*, Colfa, lest you join him and his predecessors for less *mentally taxing* labor.

**Colfa:** Of course, Overseer. We'll redouble our efforts.

Garrigan will linger a bit, examining the repair shop, while Colfa hurries off towards the Processing room. Eventually, Garrigan will leave and head for the shop floor.

## STRENGTHS

**Crushing Blows:** Garrigan will smash into enemies, dealing one Level 2 and one Level 1 injury.

**Stressful:** When resisting Garrigan's consequences, take +1 stress.

**Breastplate:** Garrigan's steel breastplate will need to be removed or destroyed before Ashwood can be used against him effectively.