The crunch of snow under fur boots ceased as Thurle signalled the half dozen men to a halt. The swirls of powdery snow had finally come to rest and the bitter, cold wind had died down. A serene quiet settled over the white landscape scarred only by their tracks. Thurle filled his lungs with the cold, crisp air and surveyed the woods ahead of them. Three sets of tracks disappeared between the trees. Huge, shallow imprints made by trolls.

Thurle had come to know much about them as he had tracked them without rest for two days. The trolls moved swiftly in the deep snow despite their bulk and weight. Their wide and furry feet perfectly adapted to distribute their weight allowing them to keep a brisk speed without sinking deep. Only the driving hatred had allowed Thurle and his men to finally catch up with them, forsaking rest and hardly eating.

He had learned much from the two days of studying their footprints. The largest tracks were made by an enormous troll. Giant even among its kin. Thurle had noticed a deeper imprint of the right foot. The troll was carrying something heavy.

The smaller prints were still huge compared to those made by Thurle and his men. One set scattered about and often veered off the path kept by the other two. The blood red snow and beastly remains evidence of this one's hunting prowess.

The last pair was likely the leader. A troll shaman as evidenced by the telling-bone imprints and lines drawn in the snow. Only three tracks, but they had destroyed his life.

The trolls had attacked the village as they were out on a hunt. His wife and son slain in their beds. Skulls crushed and limbs torn off with brute strength. The families of the grim men who now waited for his signal had fared little better. The trolls had eaten some and desecrated others in unspeakable ways.

They had returned from the hunt to heart-wrenching grief. They had not burned or buried their dead. A terrible rage had driven them after the murderous monsters. The village was their grave. It no longer had any future. Like the men. If the dead would rise it would not seem unfitting. Only vengeance and death was left to them now.
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Welcome to the CRIMSON EXODUS roleplaying game. This book was written with experienced roleplayers in mind, but even if you've never played before this book contains everything you need to learn how.

The rules in this book are all part of the FANTASY DICE game system, and written specifically for this game. A roleplaying engine designed with enough crunch and depth to create a rich world with unique heroes and villains. The system promotes tactical and creative play using sleek and fast rules that focus on fun roleplaying. The book is infused with many of the radical new ideas that have evolved in the roleplaying industry, and it could be said that this author has stood on the shoulders of trolls.

The tone promoted is grim and real, but casts the players as heroes or villains that transcend the abilities of mundane men. Wounds bleed, bones break and trauma does not heal overnight. Every weapon has its own unique properties that give it certain strengths and weaknesses. A spear has reach, a shortsword is versatile, but against a man in full plate a mace might be the better choice. Armour can be assembled from leather, chain and plate, and crowned with anything from a skull cap to a visored bascinet. Sorcery is rare and difficult, witchcraft feared and the black arts even more so. Each art has its own distinct lore and characteristics.

The players are not merely characters in the GM's story. The players are sovereigns of their character's actions, feelings and aspirations. They decide where they will travel and how they will achieve their goals. The GM is trusted by the players to provide adventure with challenges and rewards that fit the aspirations of the PCs and interests of the players. Indeed, the players may wish to describe and design aspects of the world and adventures in which they will take part. A good GM should be eager to welcome such constructive and dedicated involvement from the players. The players also play the roles of their character's family, friends, pets and allies. A journey that starts out with a small fellowship can grow into a campaign of empire building. If everyone is so inclined.

It is important to remember, whether you are the GM or a player, everyone should contribute and work together to make the game fun. The GM only has the authority to present challenges and referee the rules because the players have decided to put their trust in him. Likewise, each player is responsible for bringing their own fun, enthusiasm and ideas to the game. The consensus of everyone at the gaming table, virtual or otherwise, is always the utmost authority in all matters.

The Basics

So, one of you is the Game Master and the rest are players. These can be fixed roles, or the duty of being Game Master can rotate if several people want to try their hand at game mastering. It is also possible for two people to share the role of being Game Master if you are so inclined.

Once you have sorted out the roles you should agree on the type of game you want to play. Are you aiming for a grand campaign, a series of loosely connected adventures, or just a single game session or two? Do the players want to be involved in political intrigues, heroic battles, exploring the wilderness, plundering ancient ruins and abandoned castles

Very little maths is required to play. The resolution system is designed to play fast with minimal effort, but still retains a high degree of tactical play and granularity.
Core Concepts

for loot, or something completely different - like establishing their own power base or working as travelling merchants? Everything does not have to be nailed down and there will typically be several elements in play for each adventure, but it helps to know what gets everyone excited. Both so the GM can plan events accordingly and so that the players can create appropriate characters.

Dice

| D4: A four sided die. |
| D6: A six sided die. |
| D8: An eight sided die. |
| D10: A ten sided die, where zero is ten. |
| D12: A twelve sided die. |
| -1D: Subtract one die. |
| -2D: Subtract two dice. |
| +1D: Add one die. |

Four, six, eight, ten and twelve sided dice are used to make the game both fast and fun. You never need to add bonuses or subtract penalties from the dice result. There is no counting of successes. You simply roll the dice and the highest roll is your result. You will need at least one of each die, but to avoid having to roll many times for a single result it is recommended to have five or more of each type.

Character Sheet

In addition to dice you will need a pen and some paper to write down the details of your characters. The paper on which you do this is referred to as a character sheet and you can copy one from the appendix of this book, download it or draw your own.

How It Plays

You never need to roll the dice when you have the skill needed. Only when you try to push beyond your boundaries or pit your might against your foes must you roll the dice of lady luck.

You will not be alone. You have companions who are as exceptional as you. It would, however, be a mistake to think this will make you invincible or that you are favoured by fate. You will face many challenges, and sooner or later everyone meets their nemesis. There are great horrors out there and you must be careful to choose your challenges wisely.

Know your limitations. Avoid confrontations where you do not have the advantage. Know your enemy. The better prepared, and more you know of the challenges you will face, the more likely you are to walk away victorious. A quality sword and sturdy armour is important, but do not neglect to make allies and friends. Some challenges will leave you no choice but to flee unless you have allies upon whom you can call.

It's All About the Players

As a player you have great influence on what direction to take play. You may or may not have a direct influence on world events, but when it comes to the story of your character you decide when to face danger and when to run away. As a GM you take your cues from the aspirations of the players’ characters and what they tell you they want to do. Not everything will be what it appears, and there may be unexpected challenges and detours, but the story told is that of the PCs.

Forget Balance

There are no balanced encounters. As players you are free to pick your challenges, but you are also responsible for determining if you are up to the task. As GM this places an even greater responsibility than balancing foes on your shoulders. The responsibility to give the players a fair chance to estimate their opposition and offer some hint of warning when they face impossible odds. There is of course always uncertainty and surprise, and the GM is under no obligation to warn the players if they do not prepare and tread with care.

Just as challenges are not balanced neither are the rewards. If the players decide to go hunting down the local monster there is no guarantee that it will have hoarded treasure. Sometimes the challenge simply does not match the reward, and the players should either walk away or be grateful to have survived. Perhaps richer for the experience. Remember also that not all rewards are material. Allies, reputation, status or simply helping to turn the tide of a war can bring greater benefits than any coin or shiny sword.

Attribute: A measurement of one of the basic elements of a character, such as strength or cunning. Attributes are written with a capital letter.

Skill: A measure of a character's proficiency for a certain ability gained through training or experience. Skills are written with a capital letter with any speciality that applies in brackets.

Stats: The collection of attributes, skills and other relevant features that make up a character.
Despised and feared by Bardur commoners, derided and ruthlessly exploited by the Bardur nobility. Yet, while they toil away as faithful servants without complaint or resistance, in their hearts burns a fierce hatred and deep rooted conviction that their time will come. Through countless generations they have held true to their Serpent Gods, and in the dark of the night pilgrims still make their way to the shrines in forbidding and ancient ruins.

**Those who fear serpents should not come east.**
**Those who do not are fools.**

**Physique**

Although not much shorter than the Dwarves the Toth appear smaller because of their puny physique and gaunt limbs. Their bony, emaciated bodies are sun-baked giving them a dark complexion with deep set brown or green eyes. Some have short, black hair, but many, even among the women, are bold from birth.

**Prophesies and Omens**

A dark history and bleak future looms over the east. The landscape is unforgiving, the people unsympathetic and everywhere ancient ruins stand testament to the dark and powerful past of the subjugated Toth people.

Great temples were built with torturous slave labour from great slabs of black stone retrieved perilously from the wastes. Stones which have been pilfered to build the castles of their conquerors on the very ruins of their holy sites.

Yet, the time for vengeance may be close at hand if the spreading wars and plague herald the rise of the Serpent as the black clerics proclaim. Again unspeakable horrors slither from the wastes summoned by ancient black arts to prepare for a red dawn of sacrifices that will end the reign of the usurpers.

**Awake Ancient Serpent**
**We Call Your Name**
**Your Children Await You**

**Language and Names**

The Toth speak their own tongue known colloquially as the serpent tongue. They consider their language sacred and do not like to share it. The Bardur nobility of the east feign disinterest in what they proclaim as the primitive culture of their subjects, but most still learn to understand at least the basics of the serpent tongue.

The Toth are scholarly and studious, and nearly all learn to read and write both the serpent tongue and Elven. Most also learn to speak Bardur fluently, but they consider it an ugly and vulgar tongue.

Male Toth names: Agroarg, Arlarg, Bogarmok, Catrak, Esconan, Fenet, Hagresh, Han, Hararthorn, Hathormane, Irlarg, Throrg, Torgrak, Urmorn, Vorkith

Female Toth names: Dothadrane, Eviane, Idrun, Isol, Karith, Lilys, Modin, Torarmine
Kingdoms and separated by the great distance of the now lawless Heartlands those loyal to the Empire can expect no aid from the west.

Vren Peninsula

The tall, impressive barbarians of the Vren peninsula were long forced into the troll infested winter lands of the northern hills. Yet, they were never defeated and the southern hills were always held at great cost. During the golden age this cost could easily be afforded, and impressive fortifications were built to protect the extensive iron and gold mines snaking their way throughout the rich region. Situated on the southern tip of the Vren peninsula great loads of ore were transported through those hills to the sea ports where great ships carried the ore to the mainland.

It was the first region to fall because of the exodus as battle hardened Elnar veterans were priced highly by the departing Elves and few were left to defend against the fierce barbarians of those lands. So quickly were the southern hills taken that not a man, woman or child escaped, and all that remained of the fleet was captured with anchors down.

Now the barbarians have Elnar slaves to build more ships, and the province of Avanto is already occupied and largely defeated by the strength of their warriors. Kantola is better fortified by the hardened northerners of the Empire, but still under severe threat and even Elnor is raided on a frequent basis.

A fleet of great, crimson sailed ships such as the savage men of the white cliffs could never have imagined dropped anchor on the western shores. White faced warlocks towering over men disembarked and bent beast and grass to their will.

Majestic towers and temples were conjured from rock and wood, and under the glorious crimson banner they sallied forth to the east. Across grassy plains where death stalks great herds day and night, and no man is safe.

When they reached the stormy seas of the east a city was carved from the cliffs where they built great ships to launch them into the far east. Across the sea and astride six legged wyrm's they liberated men from cruel worshippers of ancient evils. All the way into the endless wastes they chased the servants of the Serpent and crowned Elnar Kings in distant lands.

Elnor

Elnor is the greatest of the four remaining provinces of the Empire, and until a century ago, under the direct rule of the Eternal Empress Tesola Yamen herself. It is now under the ruthless rule of King Sukula Isus and consists of seven expansive oblasts. Kipukivi, Tusku, Heimintie, Lohik, Atalus, Timofei, Kymi and Linna.

The Imperial seat is located in the Elven city, Kipukivi, in the oblast of the same name. The splendour and magnificence of the great harbour city stands as a testament to the enormous power, wealth and ingenuity of the Elves and their Elnar subjects. Carved into the cliffs with spires and palaces sprouting seamlessly from the landscape in a breathtaking view of crimson banners.

The harbour itself is an elaborate masterpiece of piers, quays, wharfs and slipways of stone and wood which once serviced a busy traffic of ships. This traffic has slowed to a trickle and large segments of the harbour have become derelict no-go zones where only unsavoury characters frequent. The great warehouses dug into the cliff side used to be filled with wares but are now only partially used. Much of the complex labyrinth of halls, stairs and tunnels that connects the harbour and city now abandoned and forgotten. The great pulley system is still used to transport goods from the harbour to the city but only two of the five great wheels are still in use.

Despite the dramatic decline of the Empire, Kipukivi is still thriving. It is one of the few places where Elnar nobles and slaves alike still scurry into the gutter to give way to Elven loremasters and warlocks. Its citizens are largely isolated from the famine and plague that ravages the rest of the Empire.
Even to the most seasoned hunter who would be keenly aware of the long, sharp upper canine teeth in their heavy dog-like muzzle with its powerful jaws.

The face is black and without fur, while the body is covered by a thick, dark brown coat which turns grey as they age. Their tails are thick, strong and around half a meter - held in an arch while walking on all four, but used for balancing when climbing or running. They are fast runners, but they are truly at home in the trees and climb with great ease and speed.

The muscular males average around fifty kilos with a length from the top of the head to the tail of just over a meter. Although they walk on all four they can stand like a man, in a half crouch, for a long time. Although tiring the posture frees up their arms and increases their height. Which is advantageous when trying to bite someone’s neck, throat or face. However, they prefer sitting on their cushy buttock pads when feeding or sleeping.

The Forest Devils are not well adapted to a winter climate and suffer greatly during cold winter nights. A clever alpha male may steal a torch and they are not afraid of camp fires, but they are not able to keep the flames alive for long.

On cold nights they huddle together in caves, treetops or anywhere they can find shelter.

True omnivores they will eat anything they can get their hands on. They happily forage for roots, seeds and insects, but whenever they can they add meat to their diet. They eat pretty much anything they can kill - including those of their own kind from other troops.

Because of the size of their troops, great appetite and destructive behaviour they commonly strip an area clean of edible plants and animals, and then move on leaving a trail of devastation in their path.

Forest Devil troops consist of gangs of 1D100 individuals, but supertroops with over a thousand members exist. A troop stays in an area for as long as it remains safe and has sufficient food, and then moves in whatever direction holds most promise.

Troops rely on their numbers, taunts and spontaneous, vicious attacks in small groups to drive off or kill predators. They typically try to kill anything they come across and may attack villages, groups of travellers and even large towns. Small groups will harass and taunt in the hope that their prey is weak, or will panic and run. If an attack goes well more and more Forest Devils from the troop will join the fray and taunts will turn into direct attacks. Morale is however fragile, and if the attack goes poorly the troop is quickly routed as everyone flees to save their own skin in a chaotic retreat.

**Furyu 3D10**

Attributes: St 3, Ag 3, De 0, Sp 2  
Beak: short grim slash  
Talons: medium grievous pierce  
Reflex: 2D10  
Nature: Cautious  
Toughness: Normal  
Regions: Northern and Central Heartlands  

Large, flightless and solitary predatory birds over two-and-a-half meters tall and weighing up to 350 kilos. The heavy, muscular bird is the terror of the Heartlands as it ambushes its prey, and uses its sharp talons and beak to bring it down.

Its main weapon is its large, hooked beak, but its favourite tactic is to charge the prey from an ambush and sink its vicious talons into its side. Groups of men are safe from attack, but one or two men away from the group might be considered easy prey.
The Empire is on her knees.  
Ravaged by barbarians and plague.  

It is a time of swords and of sorcery.  
In a grim world of monsters and witchcraft.  

Explore, pillage and plunder.  
Plot and scheme with decadent royals.  
Wield spear and shield as a mercenary.  
The choice is yours - adventure awaits.