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TURNIP28

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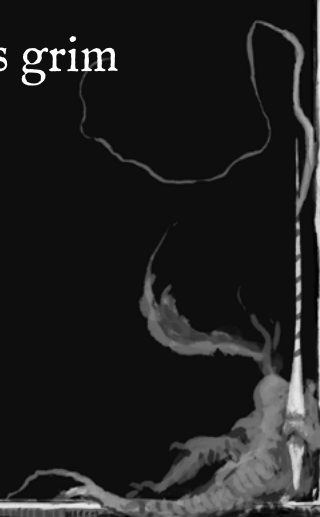
A monstrous wave of lead hurtled through the mist. Screams erupted from the line as it hit. With a horrible crack, certain death deflected from the battered crest of Garret's helm. Rusted shot tore through poor Victor opening his chest and spilling his bowels. He went down with a splash, disappearing into the bog, his innards torn at by searching roots pulling him down into the mud.

“Forward!” Bellowed their Captain. “Forward!” A riot of musket fire erupted in response.

The Sons of the Mandrake closed the gap. Their Inquisitor pulled a disgusting Shako'd hulk under with his eel hook, his brethren beat the enemy back with mouldy cudgels. In the midst of the whirling commotion, Garret chewed and gulped down the undulating mandrake he had saved since the start of the pilgrimage. He suppressed the urge to vomit as excruciating power surged through his body. Three enemy soldiers waded hastily towards him. Garret thrashed violently, hurling screamed curses at their searching pikes before severing their limbs.

For a moment the battle waned and the soiling fog peeled away. Garret stood alone in silence. He could see the remains of his comrades among the root laden corpses of foul heretics scattered about the marsh.

Unhooking a hatchet from his belt, he set about his grim work and settled in for lunch.





T28

TURNIP28

Turnip28 is a regular glimpse into the horrible world dreamt up by artist Max FitzGerald. This issue will cover building your Regiment, the world in which they find themselves and the amazing community projects already in motion.

Churned mud and swampland stretches out into the gloom. Thick fog hangs heavy in the air. Rolling barrows loom out of the murk. A strange root writhes underfoot.

A thousand years after the defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Austerlitz, the world has fallen into decay. Endless war has led to technology stagnating, and beautiful countrysides have been ground to a thick ruin under the boots of a million dead men.

Now, nothing grows. A bizarre and horrible root covers the land; strangling the life from the trees, poisoning the water, and filling the sky with an acrid mist.

Humanity barely endures by harvesting this disgusting tuber. It twists their bodies and minds, and infests their thoughts with divine visions of lost vegetables.

Bizarre religious orders have formed.

They stockpile abandoned weapons unearthed by the twisting roots.

Marching in column under fluttering banners, brandishing mud-clogged muskets and rusted bayonets, they are cruel parodies of long-forgotten armies on the march.

Gather your troops. Fix bayonets.
Devote yourself to the roots.



In this issue we will introduce you to the world of Turnip28. We will look at some of the pockmarked populace, the places they trample, and the strange roots that make their lives so interesting.

We will show you how to start building and converting your own *Regiment*. We will guide you through naming your order, modelling your followers, designing your heraldry, and of course the most important part: choosing your patron root vegetable.

We will also look at wonderful examples from the community and stories of strange goings-on in the County of Cist, the pock marked, fog bound focus of Turnip28.

Exciting things are fermenting beneath the soil, so let's begin!

Ancient burial mounds litter the landscape. Scattered huts peek out from the mud. Decayed trees creak in the breeze. Flocks of swellings swarm overhead as the puckered ooze of the swamp drowns another helpless fool.

Cist is a landlocked county situated somewhere in what remains of Central Europe. Indecently muddy, miserable and home to all manner of foul creatures lurking in the mist. It is far from being a nice place. The inhabitants are equally as foul: a squabbling collection of ragged peasants, scavengers and murderers.

The apocalypse has not been kind to Cist and its people, who in general are a sour lot. They have managed to claw back enough technology to exist in a somewhat medieval state, living as they do in cobbled together fortifications and the remains of slowly sinking slums. If a visitor were to climb up treacherous steps and look out from the highest towers of Geets, the capital of Cist, they would gaze through thick fog out onto a wheezing marshland pimpled with villages. A keen-eyed tourist might spot one of the many hunched parties of puddle farmers or stilt hut scavengers. The clanging bells and bellicose grumbling of these denizens carries along ancient and hidden paths through the swamp, while the patter of rain on rusted iron and the cry of disturbed marsh animals mark out further mysterious movements lost to the gloom.

The county of Cist is an intensely schismatic place and this is reflected in its people. Every person, building and animal belongs to some form of unique cult or holy order dedicated to a root vegetable. Cistish folk – as is their correct demonym – insist on proudly costuming themselves in ancient uniforms and fashions. They will in every case resort to decorating their possessions in as many root themed icons, relics, pendants, banners and tokens as possible.

A persistent unpleasantness, the roots have been part of life for as long as anyone in Cist can remember. What little history can be gleaned from decayed papers suggests that the roots infested the world with their enormous tendrils sometime after the cataclysmic black powder conflict.

Running rampant and thriving in a countryside destroyed by war, the serpentine network of fibrous tentacles has sucked the life from the ground, poisoned the seas and fouled the air. In return for its laborious parasitism it has sprouted many strange and miraculous vegetables, which in turn feed the inhabitants of Cist. These roots have mutating, mind-warping effects, so that the people and animals of Cist and the larger world have changed in many odd ways.



Dining on the roots also provides strange dreams that encourage the people (and sometimes the animals) to spend their miserable lives worshipping and caring for this parasitic leviathan. The afflicted completely devote their lives to tending and harvesting the mutating gifts.

These tubers, although appearing as slightly more repellent versions of our own root vegetables, are more often than not filled with semi-formed organs, cartilage and bones and are some way to becoming uncomfortably alive. Tasting repugnant, containing bloated masses of boils, hairs and carbohydrates, they are deeply adored by Cistish folk despite their mutating effects. It's quite common for inhabitants — who after some years have begun to look more root-like than human — to be found gossiping in Bhirrian pubs about their latest lumps or fondly reminiscing about a particularly violent spate of The Rooty Growths.

Von Sneg salivated under his visor as he leant in to sniff the relic. Carefully, he unclasped the gilded case and prized open the jewelled locket of bone that lay inside.

~ Warnings to the Obstinate
by Victor Auguste

While one is likely to find the locals complaining about their betters in the pubs of Bhir, there are also quite a range of settlements spattering the swamps of Cist.

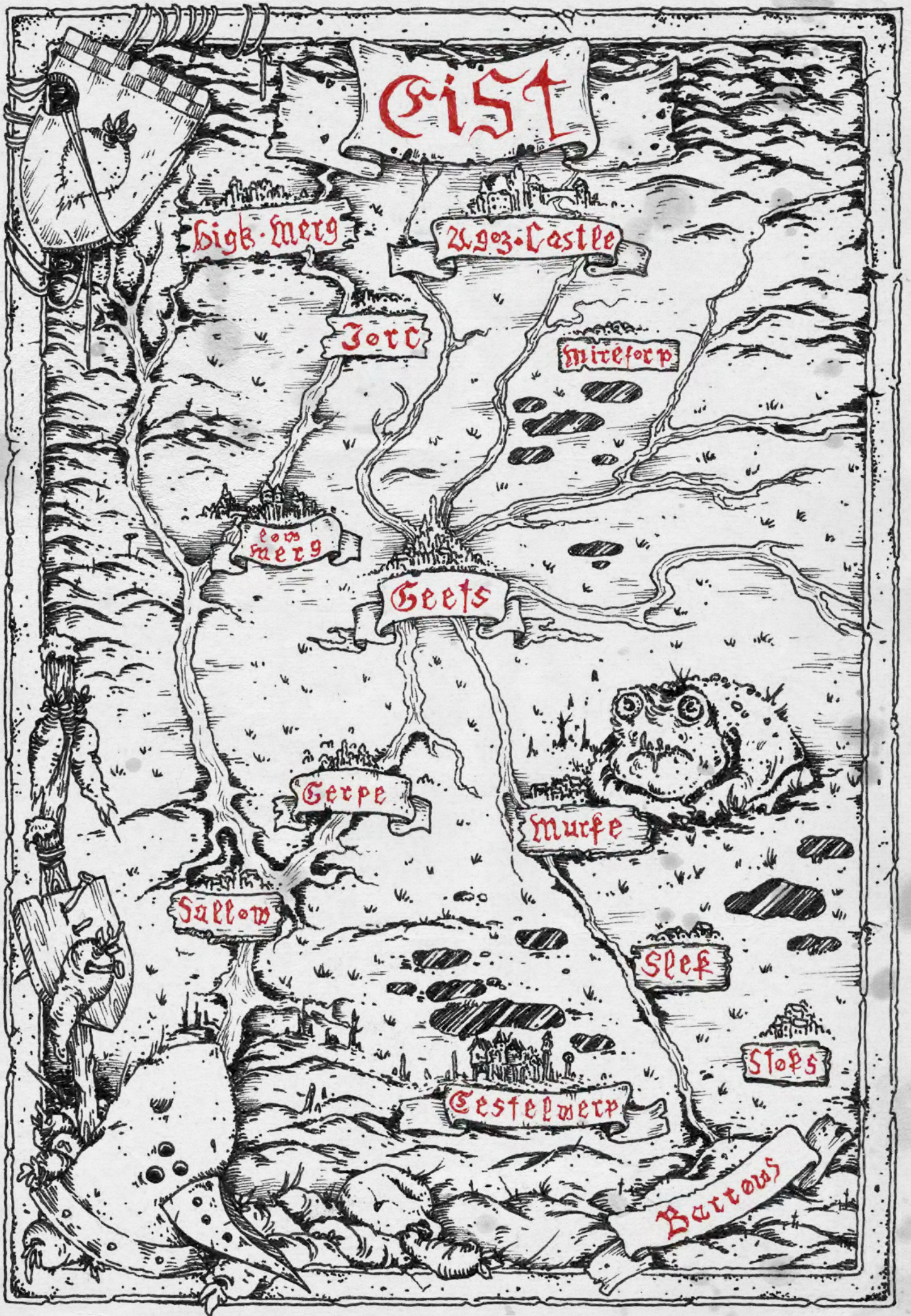
Geets is the biggest, having its own walls, cobbled streets, and labyrinthine bridges. Agoz Castle is a cramped and crumbling bastille forever sinking into — and rising out of — the mud. Gerpe has its walking stilt huts, Krotz its mines, Slekk its forges, and Shellwood its mucus.

The other settlements have been strangely silent this year, though it's imagined they are just preparing for the upcoming festivities.

Outside the county are root-ridden barrows: piles of bodies heaped in the aftermath of generations of Regimental squabbling, overgrown with moss and cloaked in an impenetrable fog.

In the gloom roam enormous root-born horrors worshipped as minor deities by the hillfolk of Cist. Recently they have been spotted more and more by scavenging parties, the monstrosities loping around the foothills and moaning to themselves in their ancient tongue.





GIST

Big-Merg

Weg-Castle

Jorc

Mireforp

Low-Merg

Geets

Gerpe

Mucke

Sallow

Slef

Stops

Gestelwerp

Barrows



Shellwood

Bir

Krotz

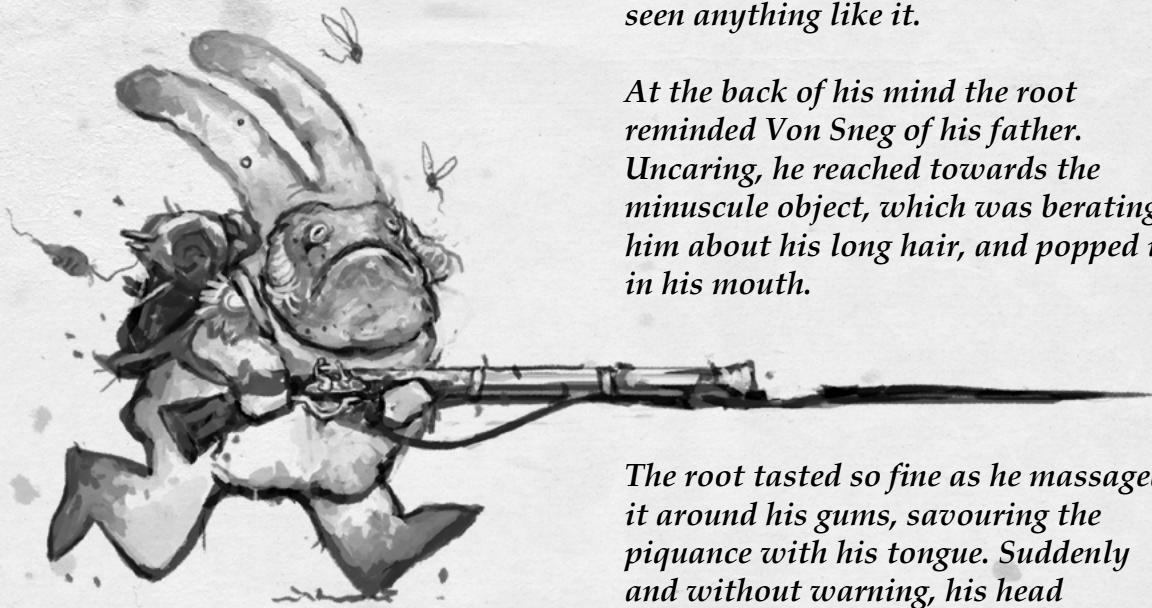
Southern
Marshes

Barrows

There exists only one complete map of Cist, locked away in the lump pits of Cestlewerp. With the assistance of Tod, we have managed to smuggle a copy to help you on your way.

Tod was once a dashing cavalry officer, who after a heavy night's carousing decided to lick an amphibian radish for a bet.

He became increasingly toad shaped over the course of a week, and now as a lumpy toad mutant acts as a sword for hire to those Regiments yet ignorant of his illustrious career.



The squelching county of Cist attracts roaming bands of root-obsessed zealots calling themselves Regiments. They flock to the county for the local root festivals, searching for rare roots with divine powers. The countryside becomes overrun with these homicidal pilgrims and famished root fiends.

In Turnip28, hobbyists will find themselves in charge of their own Regiment and will swear allegiance to one root vegetable above all others. They will mutate their leader, gather their followers, and decorate their banners.

Hobbyists will choose from a selection of powerful abilities, strange vegetables and chaotic weapons, which will all be described in the accompanying and still developing Turnip28 Core Rules. This living document will describe how to build a Regiment for battle, but we will briefly describe the makeup of a Regiment and its followers here as well.

The officer's eyes swam in delirious desire. Within the locket lay a tiny shrivelled potato-like vegetable. Oh, it was glorious. A root, perfect in its shape, its size, its scent. He had never seen anything like it.

At the back of his mind the root reminded Von Sneg of his father. Uncaring, he reached towards the minuscule object, which was berating him about his long hair, and popped it in his mouth.

The root tasted so fine as he massaged it around his gums, savouring the piquance with his tongue. Suddenly and without warning, his head imploded. In a shower of flesh the remains of Von Sneg's neck and spine sucked violently upwards, coiling in mid-air. What was left of his features coalesced into a mass of wiggling toes and roots. His followers cheered as they clapped him on the back, then hurled his twitching body into the back of the cart. Good old Sneg, they murmured in the ranks.

~ Further Warnings to the Obstinate by Victor Auguste the Younger

The door crashed inwards as several large men carrying cudgels and wearing evil grins entered the hovel. The elderly couple grimaced as brutish soldiers helped themselves to their valuables. Through the remains of the door frame the couple peered outside into the evening light. A horde of shuffling men and women marched through the village square, their formation resembling something less like an army and more like a millipede with a limp. Hunched and crooked, they stumbled forward in a grumbling mass to the chanting of Hedge Priests and the barking of Snobs. Visors locked by rust, bayonets bristling, mossy tufts sprouting from filth-caked bodies; they were the Regiment..

A Regiment is always led by a character, known to their followers as the *Toff*. Individuals exhibiting odd mutations and outstanding personalities, Toffs represent the fanatic holy men, inspiring commanders, and auspicious prophets that aim to gain a reputation in the swamps.

Following the Toff like leeches are a collection of squabbling *Toadies*. These are the snivelling subcommanders that fawn over their self-important Toff on their crusade.

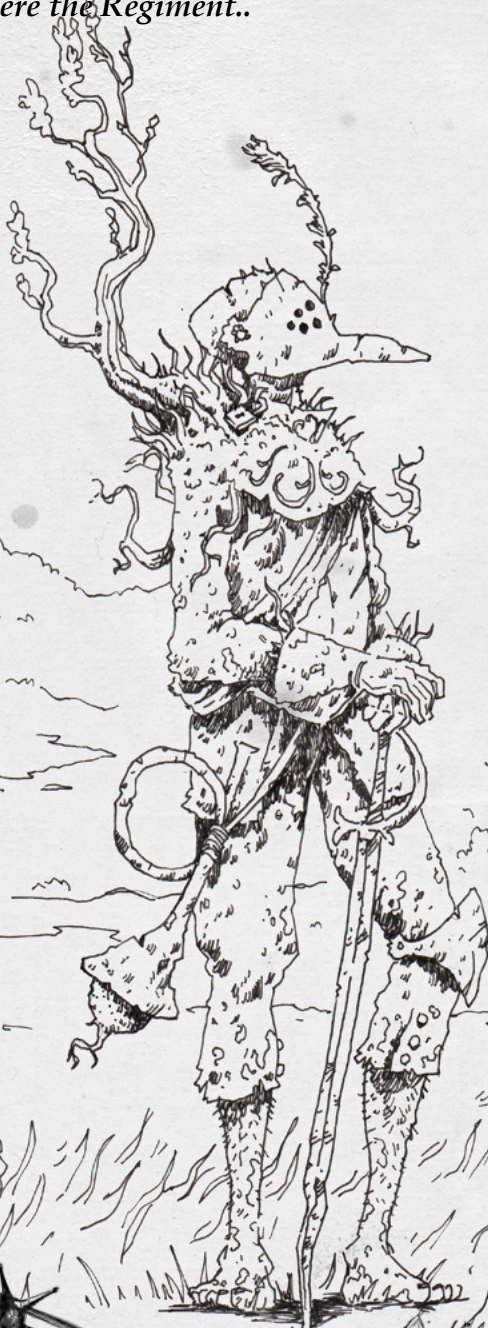
Supporting this cast of aristocratic characters collectively known as *Snobs* are their Followers, which can be categorised into three general groups: *Brutes*, *Fodder* and *Chaff*.

Brutes are the fighting elite. Especially dedicated to the cause and completely addicted to the strange powers of the roots, Brutes are relatively well fed and often heavily armoured.

Fodder form the core of most regiments. These followers are the masses willing to lay down their lives for their odd causes. Malnourished saps, Fodder are gathered together in tight order and pushed onwards by pounding drums and inspiring banners.

Chaff represent the lighter skirmishing troops. They are remarkably terrible shots, but the Chaff's ability to distract and confuse opponents proves invaluable in the heat of battle.

There exist so many more exciting types of followers, cavalry, artillery, and characters a Regiment may collect in its travels. We just can't wait to show you all the strange beasties and miscreants to come, especially Max's favourite pet: a horribly cute loaf of bread on legs called, "Ergot."





FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR

Didn't think it would come to this.

Really didn't

Was hoping to just let him go, write his silly world and publish it for you all to enjoy. But, we've had a few questions. Questions! Questions. You all just keep sending 'em in, and someone's got to answer them, and he surely won't be getting to that any time soon. So, hello. Nice to meet you. I am The Editor. Now, there, don't look so shocked. What, did you think our dear artist was doing this all by his lonesome? Of course not! Someone has to be greasing the wheels, running the press, mashing the papers, you know.

I'm taking some time out of my enormously busy schedule to sit down and have a chat about root vegetables. You can thank me later.

Question from Mary Snodgrass, London, Texas: *"Max, where is Australia? What's going on in Melbourne right about now? How about America? Oh boy I do love America, did you know in the civil wa—"*

Answer: Now, I hope you don't mind if I cut you off right there. I too had the same dreams as you once. I was young, bright eyed, dripping with enthusiasm. I too dreamt of rooty Americas, and of dashing cavalry stampedes through the great outback. But unfortunately, and after heavy consultation with several historical experts (provided by Max), it has been quite assured to me that America has, in fact, sunk.

It's no more. Gone.

Not satisfied, are you?

Alright, fine, so technically that's not what's happened. Not fully, at least, but you see, what's important to know about the world of Turnip28 is that it is very, very small and absolutely awful.

Really, Mary, this is the third letter today.

It's Cist, or not Cist.

Suffice it to say, you wouldn't recognize the landmass on the map as "Europe". Nor would you recognize anything as particularly American. Or Australian, Japanese, Indian or Welsh. It's all simply gone, subsumed, mutated, or devoured.

Please, stop sending this question Mary. We have found out where you live.

Now, if you'll excuse me I've got to check on Max.

Last time he started skinning animals and dumping the bones behind a Lidl.

The Editor



Dandelions & Devotion

*"Oh take him to the sodden plot and make him sup them all,
And when he's finished he'll be so blind, he won't see you at all."*

Before a band of raving butchers can be considered a Regiment they must devote themselves to a root.

Regimental root veg are precious species that the Followers of the Regiment hold above all others. The particular variety of root is treated with supreme reverence while other varieties are despised with bitter hatred.

Regiments are enormously proud of their root and will travel the land proselytising and singing tales of their exploits hoping to covert more followers to their banners.

Which root calls to you? What rhizome whispers your name? Choosing a Root Vegetable is the most personal journey a hobbyist can take.

Which will you choose for your Regiment?



With a root must come a name. Something to shout at passers by, or chant under the breath while boottopping the root shrine. This could be won through bitter campaigning or vomited after a bucket of squench. Whatever its origins, a Regiment's name falls into a few general categories.

There are root based names, such as the Children of the Dying Skirret, or the Choir of the Forked Burdok.

Ecclesiastical names like the Monks of the Shattered Dandelion and the Sinners of the Wayward Milkweed.

Others are more militant, such as the Regiments named the Beet Rifles, the Yam Guards and the Horse Radish Highlanders.

Regiments that have an affinity with some of the more habitable areas of Cist may take their names from their home, or perhaps, where they were originally press ganged. Geets' Greasers, Mergland Gloggers, Bhirrish Rots and the Krottish Footlumps all are Cistish Regiments.

Lastly there are the mercenary companies led by legendary commanders. Perponchers' Balding Crows, Bennig's Nasties and of course Von Sneg's Fighting Eels.

After a name has been chosen it is quite common for a Regiment to assign a number to their band of fellows, whether this reflects the amount of times they have been defeated, or their position in a grander congregation few can say for sure.

Whatever the name, and whatever the root, the Turnip28th await you on the battlefield ready to spit on your corpse and enjoy a few hearty mouthfuls of your entrails.

'Orrible 'Eraldry

Undulating banners twitch in the wind. Foul symbols stitched into folds dance to the blare of a trumpets call. Toffs resplendent in their heraldic finery strut as crude root animals sloshed on their breastplates stand brilliant against the mud and drizzle.

The Regiments of Turnip28 are covered in rambling heraldry, from their shields to their socks they cannot help but to show off.

The designs carried by Regiments are often symbolic, representing a long and soiled history of deeds and failures. Your Regiment will no doubt have its fair share of triumphs and tribulations, so here we will talk through some of the more common heraldic designs and traditions to inspire your own.

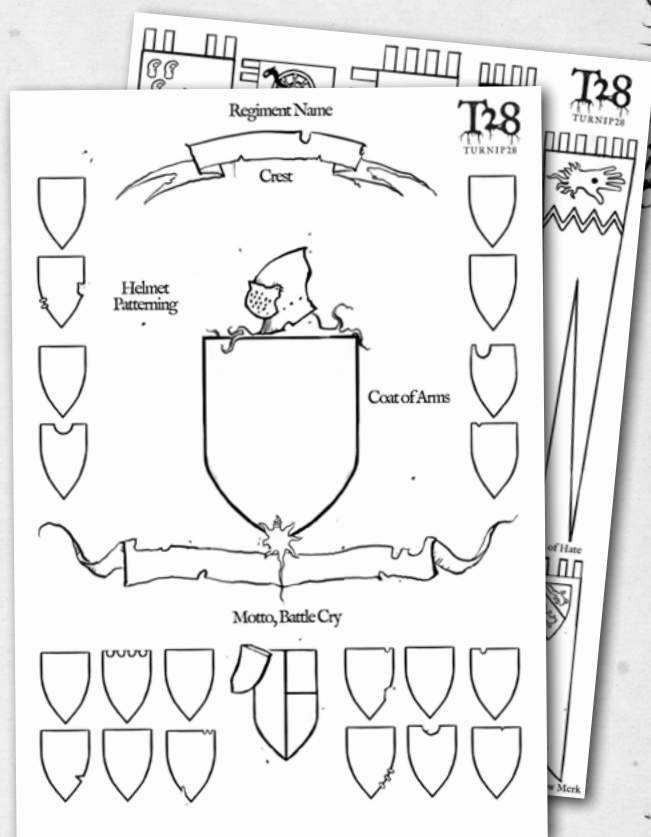
The muddy world of Turnip28 has occasional flashes of colour, though these are often inconsistent sickly smears rather than brilliant shades.

- Seeping yellows and oranges are reminiscent of cowardice and long life, carrots and onions.
- Putrid greens remind one of toads, bile or marsh stalks and can represent inexperience or misadventure.
- Clotted reds often made from ground swill ticks show off the Regiments ability to suffer debilitating wounds or its passion for roots. Commonly paired with radishes for their impotent rage
- Greasy purples and blues produced from varied snails often portray misplaced confidence.

- Black is associated with victory as flags often become covered in gunpowder residue towards a campaign's end.
- Whites made from bone and root ash call out for forgiveness through murder.

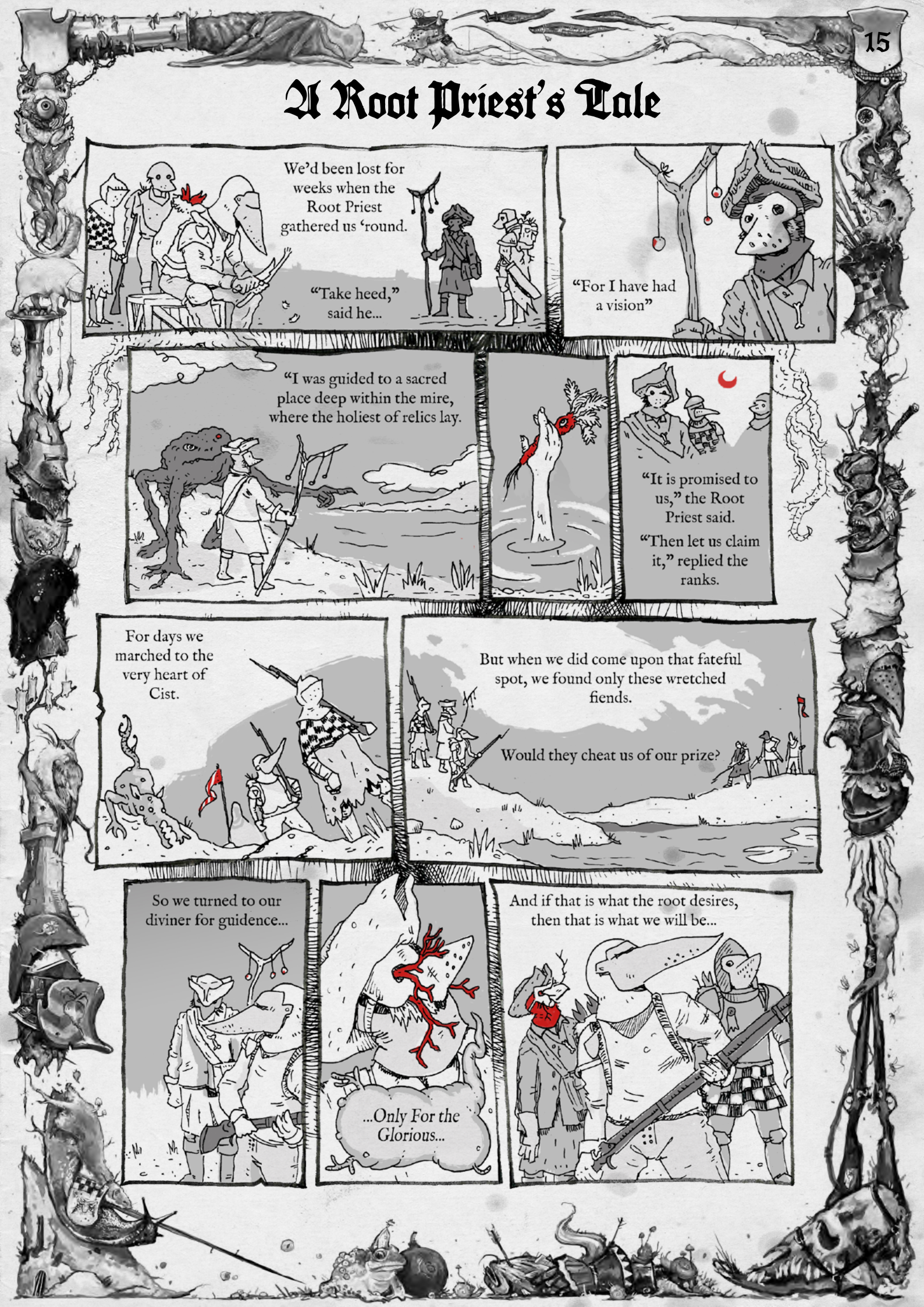
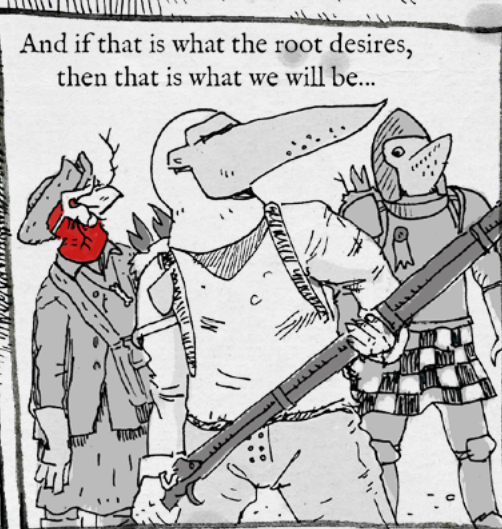
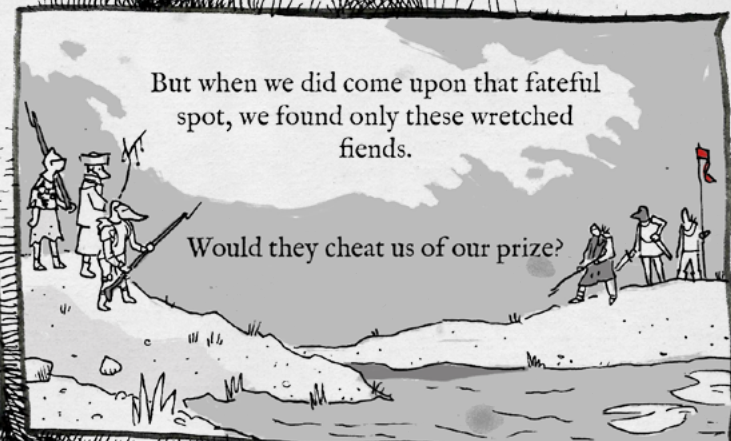
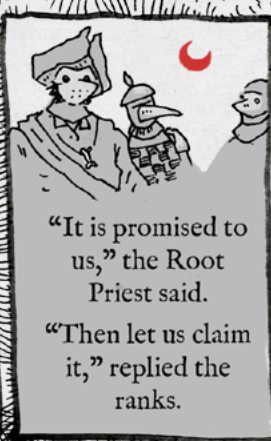
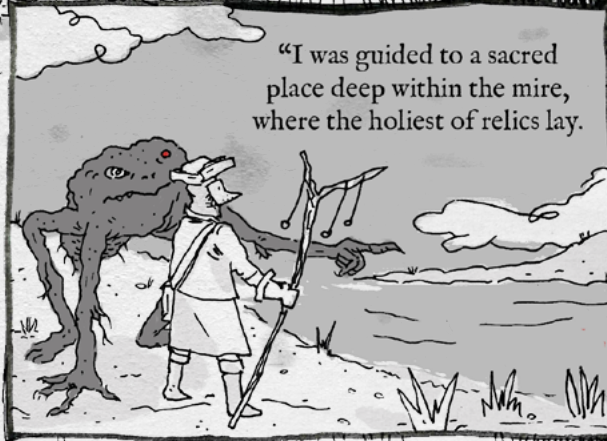
In addition to colours some regiments boast varied patterns as part of their heraldry.

- Flames are common, representing the many souls of vegetables eaten.
- Chequerboarding requires fiddly line work, usually left to soldiers with too many fingers.
- Daggers and triangles represent the teeth and toes stolen from the enemy.



Included as an accompaniment is a heraldry and banner templates for you to scribble on.

A Root Priest's Tale



Much like an inebriated cuckoo, the leeching Root tries to mimic and replace the extinct creatures and plants it has swallowed. These animals and vegetables form the crests and coats of arms of the Regiments.

This list is by no means exhaustive, but will hopefully inspire your designs.

Make sure to press your ear closely to your root. Does it whisper to you, can you hear its song?

Regimental Crests

Burdock Dormant: The sleeping root is soulful and meditative.

Carrots Passant: Symbolic of columns of marching bayonets.

Celeriac Salient: The leaping vegetable Represent overcoming confusion in battle.

Dandelion with forked roots: can represent ambition with its reaching tendrils.

Eels Coward: A favourite among Bastards.

Flowers: Do not last long in Cist and so symbolise a quick death.

Goats Guardant: Common among artillery due to their pack-goat companions.

Hogs intertwined: Symbolise family and duty.

Kohlrabi Roots Narrowed: A sign that a Regiment has survived countless famines.

Lampreys Dancing: A famous Parasite and skilled converter.

Morris clutching root bladder pipes: A skeletal figure muttered about by only the heavily mutated. A sign of coming death.

Mushrooms: The only other stubborn survivors of the apocalypse. Proving grotesque enough to exist in parasitic harmony with humans and the root. Never powerful enough to control their hosts, instead settling to bicker with each other until they stop itching. Mushroom heraldry is spattered and flecked to resemble spores.

Potatoes, Eyes and Toads: All seeing.

Root-born: The Root's indescribable attempt mimic humans. The Regiment has survived an encounter.

Slugs: Bravery without equal.

Swedes: [kålrot to our Swedish friends] Mighty and proud

Turnips Rampant: Fond of turnips



Regiment Name



Crest

Helmet Patterning



Coat of Arms

Motto, Battle Cry



Regiments of List



ISMYR
FROSTNIPS
128 TH



LEECHWATER
MUDPIKES
16 TH



NEEPLAND
REIVERS
11 TH



LEGION OF
LIGHTROOT
42 ND



BRIAR BOG
BRAMBLE BROWS
26 TH



RESERVE INFANTERIE
REGIMENT
17 TH



CRIMSON
GUARD
45 TH



GRENADIERS
"THE FRENCH
BREAKFAST"
23RD



PARSNIP VOLUNTEER
BATTALION
19 TH



TURNIP
28 TH



BOGWOOD
BULWARK
12TH



BETROOT
RESERVES
38 TH



SHELLWOOD
IRONBACKS
49 TH



CAROTID
SONS OF
THE MANDRAKE
14 TH



BLACK BEET
BRIGANDS
22 TH



PARSNIP
PARLIAMENTARIAN
GUARD
29 TH



RED ROOT
CUIRASIERS
32 ND



AL-RAH'DEESH
13 TH



STEEL
ONION
93 RD



SWEETBOG
CORSAIRS
48 TH



BLOODGRASS
BRIGADE
87 TH



EIGHTH
EARTHEN BIRTHED
58 TH



KARTOSHKAN
GUARD
34 TH



ALTENBURGER
FUSILIERS
7 TH



GLEEBLAND
WANDERING
GARRISON
112 TH



LEGION OF
THE WHITE
ONION
37 TH



MORBY
MUDCRABS
69 TH



MARAUDING
MYCELIUM MARCH
84 TH



TOADS OF
KISTCHMARSH
42 ND



THE WEeping
MARROW
52 ND



RADISHIRE
IRREGULARS
21 ST



BLOODY BEET
BOYS
76 TH



CRAWLERS OF
SLOPPY HILL
44 TH



THE BUCOLIC
DEATH
64 TH



GLUTTONS
OF TRUE TASTE
56 TH



ROOT KEEP
FODGES
59 TH



BEET SOOT
FANATICS
102 TH



FAT ROOT
FLEDGLINGS
142 ND



FLUTTERROOT
BRIGHT RIDERS
5 TH



NAVET
LA MORT
10TH



THE SNOTS
GUARD
88 TH



KNIGHTS OF
SLUDGECASTLE
67 TH

The Turnip 28th

There is no more miserable a life than in the Turnip 28th.



Cuthbert Plott, a short-lived Toff, leads from the front.



A Toady reprimands their Followers after Cuthbert's fingers were found in the stew.



The local populace shout obscenities at a Whelp.



Fodder line up for battle.



Ergot jigs its way into the fray

Rootmad and feeble bodied the Turnip 28th are Max's personal Regiment.

[They are, I assure you, human people, as are all the other soldiers and figures seen so far.

Aside from Ergot, it's clearly a loaf of bread.] - The Editor



Whelps are here to steal your rutabagas.



Galloping.



Scouting.



A helpful pack goat.



Charge of the Bastards.



The Stump Gun bursts a few eardrums.



An illiterate disagreement over scripture.



Chaff skulk between the chimneys.

The Core Tenets of Turnip28:



- **Turnip 28mm**

28mm scale miniatures are models that are usually between 28mm to 35mm tall, and belong to a 1/50 to 1/61 modelling scale. There are many high-quality plastic kits available in this scale, providing endless opportunities for converting.

- **Helmets On, Visors Shut**

To maintain a sense of mystery (and to save a bit of time from painting faces), we would suggest you keep helmets on and visors shut as much as possible.

- **Technology Stagnated at 1812...ish**

The world of Turnip28 is stuck in a post-apocalyptic state after a cataclysmic black powder war. To help reinforce this stagnation, we are keeping the technological level to roughly 1812 AD. This means that any period no matter how bizarre is encouraged, as long as it doesn't exceed too far past the height of the Napoleonic Wars.





It never listens.

A Miniature Wargame

At its heart, Turnip28 is a miniatures wargame. Within its clogged arteries and varicose veins players are invited to create their own Regiment, mixing and matching parts pried from historical model kits and piles of plastic shame.

With so many historical kits out there, it might be hard to know where to start. So, we have put together a straightforward guide to assist you in building your very first Turnip28 themed models. We will teach you the basics of converting using conventional and natural modelling materials, as well as cover the core tenets that you should aim to stick to. We will take a look at the fundamentals that make a great Turnip28 miniature, and also show you lots of brilliant examples from the community.

With no official Turnip28 miniatures, players are required to convert their models. Converting models means players can assemble characters and units out of multiple kits, using their imagination to build new and highly personalised models. Players have a great amount of freedom to flex their creative abilities, and while this might seem slightly overwhelming at first, if a hobbyist sticks with the Turnip28 core principles they cannot go far wrong.



A Toady taunts the enemy.



Building your Models

You might already have ideas about the Regiment you'd like to build. Perhaps you've dug up a model you think would make a dashing Toff or Toady. You might already own some historical miniatures that could do with a fresh coat of filth. If none of the above applies to you, don't worry, we still have you covered.



In this section, we will describe how we build and convert the models that belong to the Turnip 28th. This Regiment has been specifically built to be easily replicated. We describe the tools and techniques used in the 28th's creation, and hopefully provide some useful tips for novice and experienced modellers along the way.

Most of the tools we use are readily available, and the models we have chosen should be as equally obtainable. There is a wealth of amazing independent miniature producers out there, and we will describe some of our favourites in the guide, but the list is far from exhaustive. We can absolutely recommend searching for more online, or in the back shelves of your local hobby shop. Smaller companies that specialise in faintly-remembered periods of history need your support, and can be a wonderful resource for throwing up unusual ideas.



If you have any difficulty finding the tools or miniatures we cover in this guide, or if you could do with some help with some of the techniques, pop into the Discord and have a chat with the community. We are more than happy to share our knowledge and offer some advice.

Have a look on Instagram and Twitter, searching the tag #turnip28, for a whole host of conversions, sculpts and painted minis from the community.



Turnip 28th Fodder and Chaff



Safety

When converting miniatures, it's always worth keeping in mind that scalpels can slip, superglue sticks fingers together, and accidents can happen. Keep your tools clean and well maintained, make sure you're in a well ventilated area if needed, and cut away from yourself while resting the miniature on a solid surface wherever possible.

We won't dare suggest that you keep your table clean and tidy. Ours is often covered in random plastic sprues and roots, but you should at least try to avoid anything that could easily be knocked over while you work.

Tools

In this guide we cover the techniques and tools we've found useful for converting miniatures, but there are often many ways of approaching a problem. We try to give you the knowledge and methods for producing great looking conversions, as there is often no single exact tool to solve everything. What works for you or your miniatures may be different from what we use, so feel free to experiment. You may find a single tool that works wonders. Treasure that tool, and be sure to make a note of where you bought it.

Tools and Materials Required:

- A pair of model sprue cutters/ clippers
- A sharp blade/hobby knife
- Superglue (cyanoacrylate) and/or plastic glue
- All-purpose filler/spackle
- Static grass tufts of various sizes and lengths

Filth

We recommend adding lots of filth, mud, texture, dust, dirt, hair, grass tufts and roots to your models. Using a broad range of textures and tufts will dramatically enhance your building process by filling gaps and creating a deeper visual contrast. Feel free to experiment with all sorts of natural materials to represent limbs and sprouted mutations. With no need to worry about perfect fits and proportions, players will find that they do not require high levels of sculpting or painting skills to create satisfying models.



Turnip 28th Toady, Chaff and Multi-based Fodder.



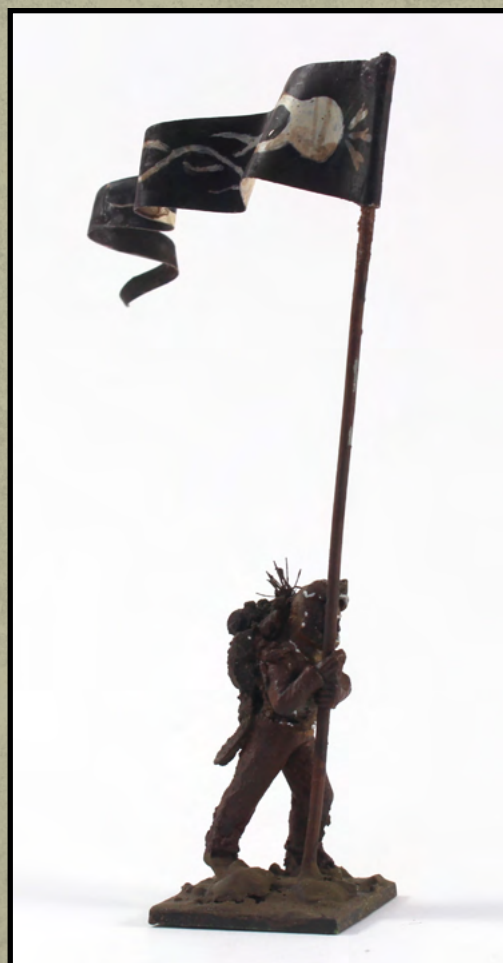
Converting the Turnip 28th

The Turnip 28th was the first Regiment Max built, after concepting out some ideas on the back of a train ticket while stuck at King's Cross. He wanted to create a force that did not require a complex paint job, was entirely plastic, and could be made completely out of two boxes from the same manufacturer. From his scribbles Turnip28 was born, and with it the Turnip 28th.

Max chose Perry Miniatures as his manufacturer. Perry produces a range of plastic and metal Napoleonic kits that are highly detailed and of excellent quality. By choosing a single source of plastic box sets he could maintain a consistent scale and keep postage affordable. High quality plastic models are incredibly easy to convert compared to metal miniatures, and we recommend choosing those for your core units. As well as making a Battalion set of French Napoleonic infantry, Perry Miniatures also make an Elite Company box. The Battalion box contains marching poses and square bases and an option to build a few skirmishers, while the Elite box contains round bases and more dynamic poses using only the skirmisher frames. Both make equally great conversion material, but as Max wanted the Turnip 28th to march in tight ranks, he chose the Battalion box.

Boxes required:

- Perry Miniatures AO 60 Agincourt Foot Knights 1415-29
- Perry Miniatures FN 250 French Napoleonic Infantry Battalion 1807-14



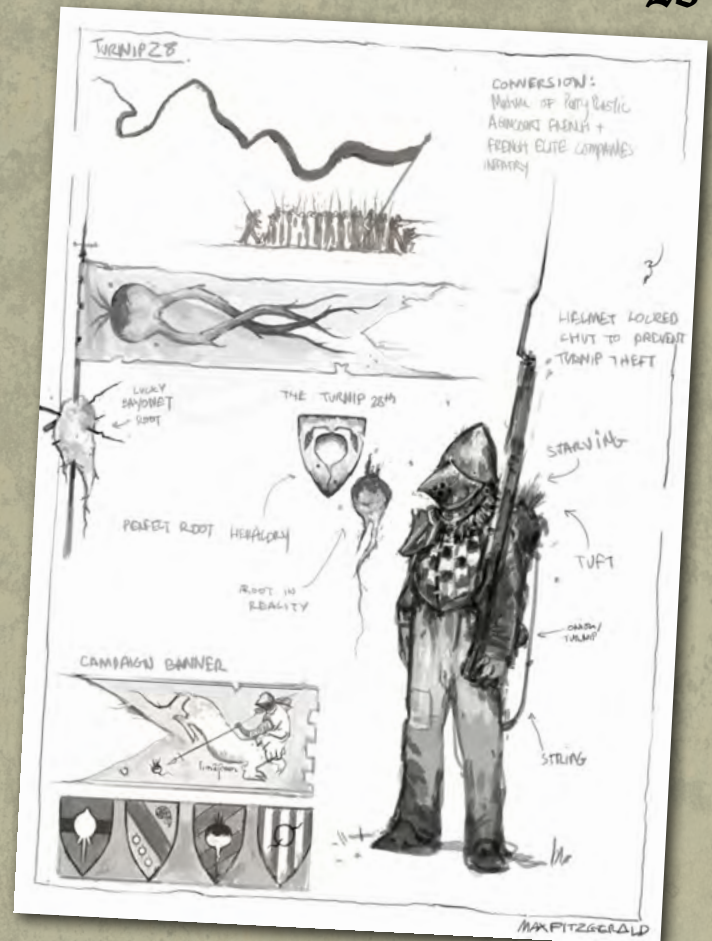
Turnip 28th Unit Leader

The following is a breakdown of how Max created a follower of the Turnip 28th.

1. Gathering the Parts:

The first step in creating a conversion is to gather the pieces required. It is good advice to keep all the parts in the same place. Smaller pieces can be easily lost, disappearing forever into grey carpets.

From the Battalion box we will require: a body, a backpack, a right arm with musket, and a left arm. From the Foot Knights box we will require a body and a visor. Also shown are bodies from the AO 70 Agincourt Mounted Knights 1415-29 that do not come with attached legs, which can produce very similar results. Perry and other suppliers like Warlord Games often sell single frames which can be a great resource for experimenting at a low cost.



Max's original concept sketch for Turnip 28



Before continuing we always suggest you return the pieces you aren't using to their original boxes. Alternatively, clipping every piece out and keeping them organised in a multi-compartment toolbox can save you much hassle in the long term, reducing the space the kits take up and making those crucial bits easy to find and ready for when you have a sudden conversion idea.

This is a good time to clean any pieces you are using of mould lines (also known as flash), which is the excess plastic left over from the moulding process. It is best to do this lightly with a dull blade, holding the edge perpendicular to the mould lines and scraping lightly. As we will be coating these models in filler and texture it is not necessary to get every last mould line, just the most obvious ones

2. Cutting the Models:

Straight edge clippers work best when cutting models for conversions. It's advisable not to use scissors or clippers with blades that overlap, as they may twist your miniature out of shape. A saw can also work here, but its main use is in converting metal models or particularly large slabs of plastic. Be patient when cutting, and secure the model so that it doesn't shoot off across the room after it has been severed. When cutting larger parts it can be valuable to slowly clip away the unwanted elements in stages, removing small amounts until you are left with the results you want. This might be worth doing when chopping up the Foot Knights, as the plastic around their waists can be quite thick.

By cutting the torsos of the models at a slight angle, we can produce a slumped look when assembled. Subtle changes in angles will produce very different expressions and poses, which on mass can give a unit a great sense of personality.

After we have cut along the lines shown we will be left with the torso of the man-at-arms and the legs of the French infantryman. The remains can be discarded or saved for later; a great use for otherwise unneeded body parts is re-purposing them as casualty markers. Nothing beats the classic pair of smoking boots.



The backpack does not need cutting up, but requires its tab removed. Trim off the back tab with a knife.



3. Assembly:

Dry-fitting is where you hold your pieces together to test their pose and to see how the pieces fit together before glue is applied. Sometimes things might not fit as smoothly as expected, so a dry-fit is a great chance to avoid having to break and reposition glued models. It's good practice when assembling your first model to dry-fit your parts before gluing. Sometimes, if a model doesn't want to easily hold together in the dry-fitting stage, you can use a tiny piece of poster tack/blue tack to keep troublesome bits like arms in place.

When gluing, first glue together the body and legs, then the arms.



Plastic and superglue both work here. Plastic glue provides a stronger bond, while superglue allows for the possibility of snapping and repositioning after it has dried. If your dried superglue is too hard to snap without damaging your model, try putting it in the freezer for a few hours. The cold will make the joint brittle, and easy to snap apart.

Your models' arms should generally be positioned in a marching pose with the left arm swinging back. Varying angles here will further increase the range of motion in your unit.



It's time to attach your model's visor and cover up whatever foul things lurk beneath it. Hobbyists may find themselves running out of visors occasionally, so we have included a tutorial for sculpting your own later.

Add the backpack on last, bending it slightly at the weakest part along the middle. Be very gentle here, and you will find that the bend will allow the pack to fit really well onto the now slumping back and the seat of the trousers. When working with models with separate heads, we recommend gluing them on last. The position of the head can dramatically change the character of the model. It could be looking depressively down, to the side in anxiety, or dreamily up into the sky.

4. Texturing:

Now is the time to add texture to your model. Using a tool that you don't mind destroying add all purpose filler/spackle to your model. Slop the filler into any gaps left over from assembly, and lots on the backpack. A light amount on the cuffs and the helmet adds some realistic wear and tear. Think about where the mud would gather.

While some filler will inevitably fall off, don't worry; you can always do another pass when it is dry.



5. Tufts:

Add grass tufts to the model's backpack and shoulders once the filler is completely dry. Put a sparing blob of superglue on the underside of the tufts, and then prod them in the centre to secure them. We will be priming the miniatures along with the tuft before painting, as this will give a nice grimy effect and further seal the tuft to the model. You can also add larger strands taken from an old paintbrush, adding several to existing tufts and creating variations in height for a more natural marshland look.

Congratulations your first model is complete. You're well on your way to your first Regiment.



Sculpting a Visor:

1. We begin by snipping off some of the blue putty and the yellow putty from the strip.



We prefer to use unequal parts of yellow and blue. Adding more blue to the mixture will increase its strength but make it less pliable, while more yellow will allow more delicate sculpting, at the cost of not setting as rigidly on the model.

2. The exact ratio will come with practise, what is most important is that one thoroughly mixes both parts.



If there are unmixed sections within the Green Stuff they will not cure, and ruin your carefully sculpted work. Mixing Green Stuff into a uniform green blob is as simple as wetting your hands and folding the two colours together until a consistent green is achieved. More experienced hobbyists will have all sorts of tricks and recipes that they swear by, including mixing in vaseline, procreate, milliput, and spit. We won't cover these here.

To make sure the Green Stuff has a solid bond to the plastic, remove any dust from the mini and check that it is oil free: washed and dried.

3. Once you have mixed the Green Stuff to the right consistency, take a small blob and place it on the face of the mini. It is wise to put on slightly less than you think you will need, as it can be quite a challenge to remove large amounts of putty during sculpting without deforming the entire visor. It's always easier to add more after the piece has dried than it is to take away. Remember to keep those tools and fingers moist.



4. The next step is to push and drag the putty into shape, forming a rough snout.



You could use your fingers or a flat edged sculpting tool, but just make sure you are very, very gentle. Do not worry about getting the shape perfect at this stage, and try experimenting with a selection of tools until you find one that works for you. We prefer a palette knife shaped tool with a curved edge for shaping.



5. Now we will wait for the Green Stuff to cure for a few minutes.



As the putty cures, its properties will change and it will become less pliable and therefore easier to sculpt. Objects one wishes to sculpt with a hard surface, like armour, are less likely to warp if the Green Stuff is stiffer during sculpting. It can be worth working on several miniatures at a time, working on one while the Green Stuff on the others cures. Remember again to, keep those tools and fingers moist.

Once we've waited for the putty to cure a bit, it should be a firm enough to work with. Now, we will work on defining the hard edges and lines of the visor.



It can be useful to have a reference on hand for the type of visor you're sculpting. For this simple one-piece helm and visor we will be trying to get a balanced conical shape and a sharp point to the nose. The visor should sit underneath the gorget where it joins around the neck.

To keep things simple, we won't worry about any hinges or sculpting the visor as a separate piece of the helm. Again, remember to keep experimenting with your sculpting tools. There is no correct tool, and you will find the one that works for you. We can recommend using something flat and with lots of lubricant for smoothing, and something sharp and flat for defining the edges. At this stage, you can also delicately cut away any excess Green Stuff with a scalpel, and then use a rubber ended brush to smooth out the surfaces. Remember again, keep everything moist.

6. Our visor is taking shape, so we should leave it to cure now. This will harden the surface and provide support for the next steps. It may take ten minutes, it may take more, as different mixes will cure at different rates. Judging the time needed will come with experience.



With the putty partially cured, we will use a sharply pointed sculpting tool to poke three small holes into the visor, aiming at the miniature's eye height to simulate the vision holes on one side of the visor. When adding rivets, holes, or visual interest, it is helpful to stick to odd numbers. The human brain seems to find this more pleasing. You may have noticed that after you stabbed the putty it has deformed slightly. To correct this, we should very gently use a rubber tipped brush to push the shapes back into place.

Once everything is looking good, leave it in a safe place to cure. This may take up to 24 hours. Be very patient here, as if you are not, all your hard work can be ruined.

7. You've been waiting a whole day, and the Green Stuff is dry. The visor is almost complete.



To really finish the model and add just a bit of polish it can be worth getting a sharp scalpel blade and gently scraping down the surfaces of the visor. This will allow you to define its shapes even further and remove any fingerprints or tool marks left over from the sculpting process.

If you are smoothing transitions between plastic and putty, always shave towards the plastic so that you do not cause excess

stress on the join and risk lifting it up. You may also want to start slicing off uneven and excess parts of your sculpt, creating sharp corners and harder edges if you are looking for less organic shapes. Never be afraid to go back and cut away your hard work. You can always add it back with more Green Stuff, repeating the steps above.

Sometimes the putty can seem a bit fragile and at risk of snapping, often where it is too thin. Applying a very thin layer of superglue to the putty can help provide a rock hard seal, which can again be scraped down with a scalpel at your leisure.

And there you have it. You can now sculpt using Green Stuff. Not as hard as it seems. OK, so it was really hard, but you'll get it eventually. It takes a lot of practise. Hopefully, by following these steps you should have at least made a very nice snout for your character. Maybe next time experiment with some roots growing out of the vision holes, or use a wire inside the putty to support a very long nose. Keep practising and you will be able to create miniatures from scratch in no time.



Teeth tokens. [Where did you get those Max?] - The Editor

Unfurling your Banners

Every good Turnip regiment needs at least a couple of banners to display their proud heraldry. Here we have a short guide on how to create a suitably impressive standard for your Units. In addition to the guide, we have included a PDF with a range of hand-drawn banner designs representing some the more well-known Regiments of Cist. All you need to do is print them out and paint them in.

Materials Required:

- Pin vice drill
- A length of stiff wire suitable for a banner pole
- Card sheets/plasticard/metal foil for banner
- Superglue or PVA

Optional:

- Banner Template print out

There are three main types of banner pole design:

- A straight pole with the banner attached horizontally
- A pole with a right angled bend providing a horizontal bar from which to hang the banner (much like the Japanese sashimono)
- And a T-shaped pole with a crossbar that was a common sight on many wargaming miniatures of the 90s.

To create a suitably strong pole on which to hang your banner we recommend replacing the plastic banner pole that comes in either command kits with a custom one made from a piece of stiff wire. Having a pole made from stronger material will allow you to give your banner extra height, supporting larger and more gaudy flags. The strength of the wire will provide needed resilience when the model gets its fair share of rough handling on the table.



To replace the banner pole, first clip away the plastic pole, cleaning away any excess with a knife. Proceed to find a suitably sized drill bit matching your gauge of wire and begin slowly drilling a hole. It can help to make a small pilot hole with a pin or other sharp object beforehand, as this small mark will help stop the drill slipping on such a small surface. Use your pin vice to drill a hole through both hands and put in the section of wire. If you are unsure about the height of the banner it can be worth leaving the length of the wire overlong and clipping it to size after it has been glued in place.

When going for a tall banner pole – or just for some extra stability – we can recommend drilling a hole into the model's base in which to place the bottom of the pole.



If modellers find during a game that models with banners are unsteady, it can be worth weighting their bases. This can be achieved with any suitably compact and heavy material. Lead shot bought off eBay can be a great compact solution, and can be hidden within the basing materials or underneath the base. As always when working with lead, wash your hands thoroughly after use and don't lick it.

The banner can be made from various materials as long as it is soft enough to bend into folds and get a sense of movement in the wind, while being rigid enough to stay bent. Heavy paper/card or metal foil are the best for this. Through much experience we have found that insides of tomato puree tubes make the best banners, but unfortunately we believe that this is a product only found in the UK, and even then some have a heavy coating of film that paint will not adhere to. To save you from having to eat several tubes of tomato concentrate in an evening, we recommend purchasing some metal foil online. If hobbyists decide to use thick paper or card, these can be further strengthened by soaking in thin pva glue after shaping. Plasticard can also be used, by heating it and then bending it into shape. We have found that plasticard can become quite brittle if not treated well and we would not recommend it for very long thin banners.

The best way of attaching the banner to the pole is to cut out several small rectangular tabs where it would join to the pole, which can then be wrapped around the pole and glued in place, providing a very secure bond. Our accompanying banner designs all have tabs which you can use as a reference when cutting out your own. It is quite possible to paint your banner once assembled, but we find it much easier to paint your banner design beforehand.

To simulate the wind and give your proud standard a sense of motion, gently squish and fold the banner in a wave as if it is fluttering in the wind. If you have designed a monstrously long banner, curling the banner in on itself and gluing its contact points will help with stability and prevent the model from tipping.

Banners can be a really great way of showing off your Regiment's exploits. If your force manages to survive a particularly bloody campaign, treat them to another lovingly decorated standard. They've earned it.



The 311th Multicellular Mouldies

Nick Borelli's fungus infested Regiment inspired by the Temple of Swellings



Bases of mixed sizes makes this Unit shine.



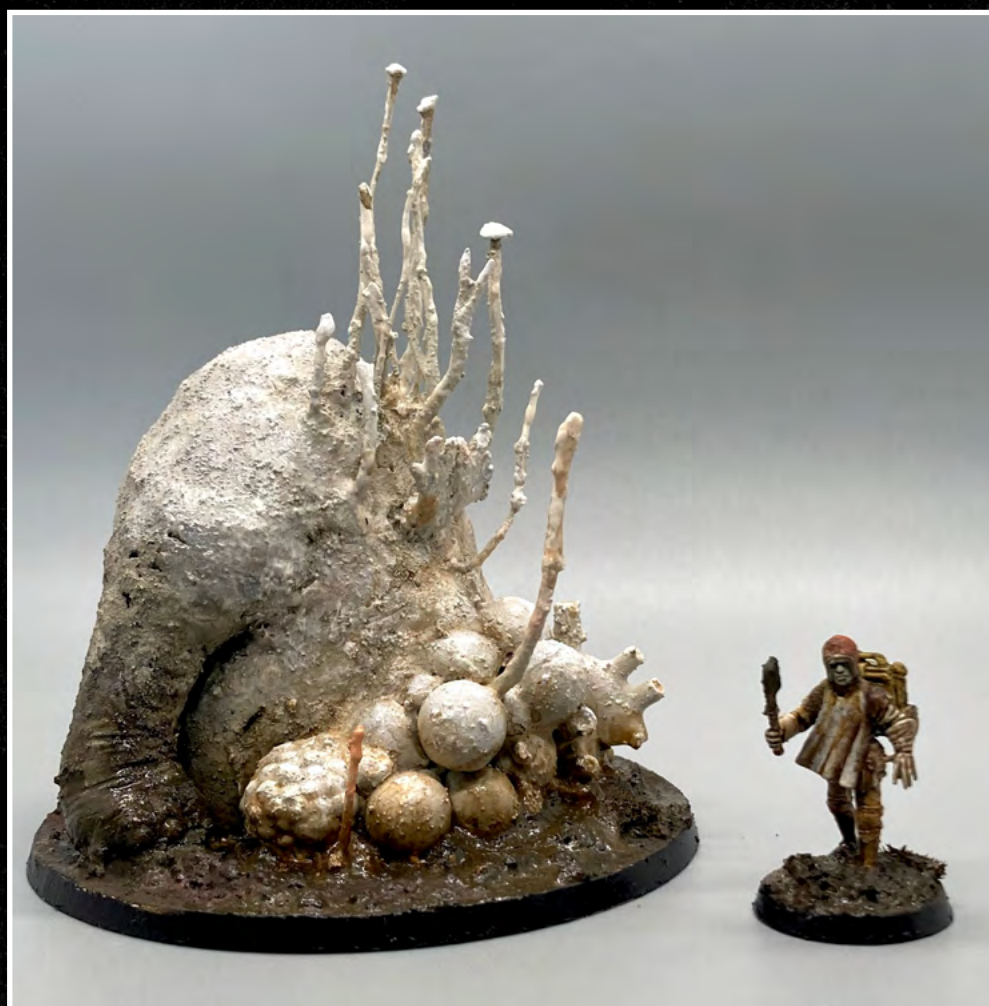
Snobs can come in many shapes and sizes.



Two units of Bastards with fantastic mounts

Mushrooms in Turnip28 are nagging colonies of holiday makers. Latching on to a host they form loving (if somewhat parasitic) relationships.

These toxic friendship may be affecting the mushrooms more than they realise. The once tightly knit hive-mind has fractured. Individual species now appear to squabble just as much as the Regiments.



The Swelling and its caring Root Priest



This is a unit of Rootlings [That's an Elephant!] - The Editor



A Trumpeting follower



An utterly overgrown Stump Gun

The 311th Multicellular Mouldies are a Regiment obsessed with zoological experimentation.

Root animals, when inoculated with mushroom spores go through a fantastic explosions of changes as the Root and the mycelium struggle for control over their organic territory.

Limbs bloat, stalks bloom, mouths silently scream and tendrils blossom as the creature wrestles to keep itself in one piece.

Nick's mushroom conversions are wonderful examples of what can be done with a themed Turnip Regiment.

In the following section we will be looking at a host of tutorials from the community, helping you discover the process behind their favourite creations..



A rather unique Root Shrine for when Nick wants to play the Procession of Woe [I shudder at your handiwork, Nick.] -The Editor.

Fungoid Fodder

Inspired by M John Harrison's *Viriconium*, Nick's mushroom unit fillers are perfect for fleshing out larger units like Fodder.

Friends together.

This tutorial shows you how to make a group of wandering mushroom hosts, though the techniques can be used to create any number of mycological monsters.

Materials Required:

- Perry Miniatures Foot Knights (1450-1500)
- Perry Miniatures French Napoleonic Infantry Battalion 1807-14
- Woodland Scenic's Trees
- Jewellery Wire
- Green Stuff, Milliput
- Super glue
- Citadel Stirland mud
- AK muddy ground acrylic



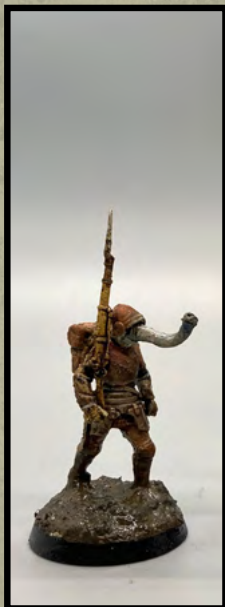
Before Nick starts his conversions he always lays out a collection of interesting model kits and bits. He enjoys the way the conversions develop organically as he sticks them together on the fly.

To create the expanded range of root animals Nick has used a collection of animal figures. You can spot the trunks, legs and ears of an Elephant scattered among the creatures below.





1. Select several bodies from the Foot Knight kit and join them side by side together using super glue. For any bodies that cannot be joined easily, use small blobs of Green Stuff to bridge the gaps.
2. Attach a musket arm from the French Battalion kit to the left most torso and a marching arm to the right.
3. Once the Green Stuff has dried completely, liberally fill the gaps between the torsos of the Foot Knight's using Milliput taking care to keep the arms and the legs distinct.



4. Before the Milliput has fully cured, stick in short pieces of the jewellery wire and branches from the Woodland Scenic's trees. These will become your fungal growths.

If these are not fully locked in place by the Milliput, when it has completely dried, seal them in place with more superglue.

5. Add texture to the models and the fungal growths with Stirland Mud. For areas that require a chunkier texture such as at the base of the growths or the tips of the stalks apply blobs of AK mud texture acrylic.

Once the texture pastes have dried the model is ready to be based. Nick has used more Stirland mud as well as some very fine wire to represent some strangling roots.



Note: Depending on the models used it can be worth gluing the figures to the base after step 1 and 2. This will help you attach stalks and apply putty and texture paste from both sides of the models.

For larger growths Nick used fake [Not Real] potatoes, for the lumpy spore sacks you can use plastic raspberries.

Mushrumping

Puffballs burst into the air drifting upwards and covering the regiment in spores. Soon parasites will bloom, coating the horde with a colourful plumage of various fungi.

Alastair Fleming has let us into his puffball secrets. [There are more than one of these mushroom fanciers. I thought this was about roots?] - The Editor

Mushrumps:

These mushrooms are a simple way to add a bit of interest to a base or miniature – they're super easy to make and a great way to use up excess putty after sculpting.

Materials Required:

- Greenstuff + Apoxie Sculpt
- Armature wire of various gauges
- Superglue
- Vaseline or handcream
- Greaseproof paper

Optional:

- Gloves



Any two-part putty would work for these mushrooms, but I prefer to use a combination of Greenstuff and Apoxie Sculpt.

I use armature wire to make bending easier, but any wire will do. Various sizes from 0.5mm to 2mm.

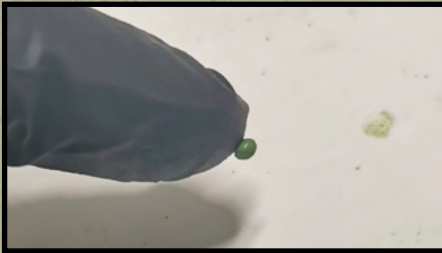
If you don't have any greaseproof paper bits of plastic packaging can also work or even a bit of plastic bag. What you are looking for is a non stick surface to work on.



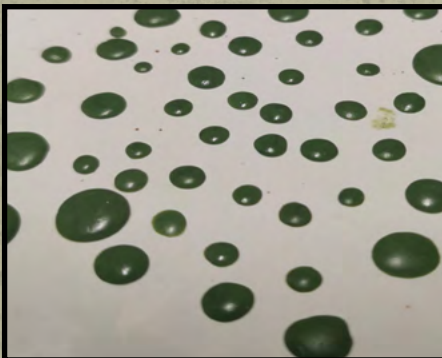
1. Get your pressing surface ready by smearing it with a little Vaseline or handcream - this makes it easier to remove the heads later.



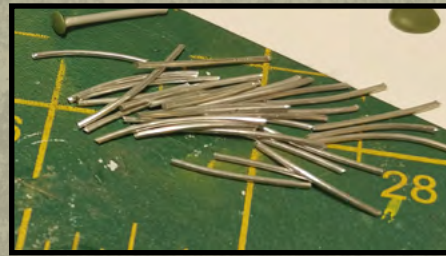
2. Mix your putty - I use a 50/50 mix of Greenstuff and Apoxie Sculpt because it's less sticky and easier to work with. I usually wear gloves because it stops your hands from also getting sticky and prevents you from leaving fingerprints.



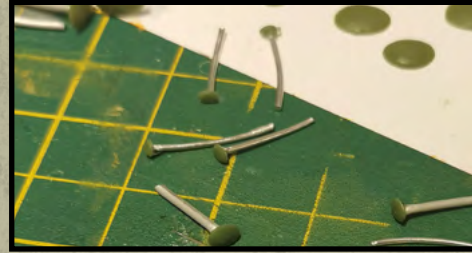
3. Take a tiny pinch of putty and roll it into a ball. Don't worry about it being perfectly round!



4. Press the ball onto the sheet - don't push too hard and flatten the ball completely. You're aiming for a smooth dome. You can make loads of these with even a small amount of putty so they're a great thing to make when you have a little spare at the end of a project.



5. While the putty is curing, make the stalks by cutting short lengths of wire. Make the stalks a little longer than you want them to be so that you have extra wire to pin the shroom to the base or miniature.



6. When the heads are almost completely solid, carefully peel them off and press them onto the wire, with a little dot of superglue to keep them in place. Doing this before they're completely cured means you can get the heads to curve nicely around the wire and make a smooth dome rather than a totally flat bottom.



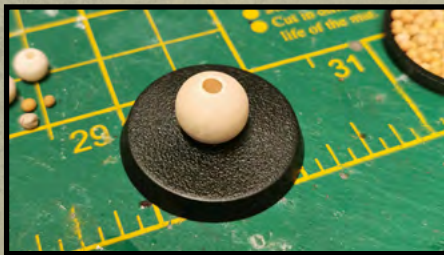
7. And done! You can add these to a model or base by drilling a small hole and pushing the wire stalk into it. When you're happy with the placement of the mushroom, it can look good to make the stem a little more irregular and organic by painting it with a layer of PVA or Nurgles Rot. If you do this, leave the base to dry upside-down so that any excess collects at the top of the stem and blends into the head.

Puffballs:

Materials Required:

- Wooden beads
- Vallejo Plastic Putty or Liquid Greenstuff
- Armature wire
- A paperclip or pin
- Cyanoacrylate superglue and accelerator

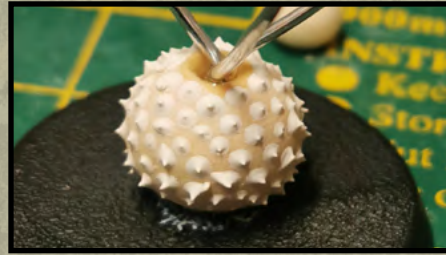
A strange form of root fungus and I use them to add a little weirdness to my bases and miniatures.



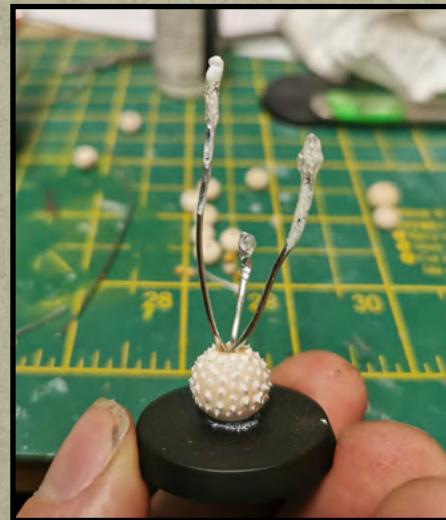
1. Glue a single bead to the base or miniature with the hole facing straight up, or at a slight angle.



2. Cut your wire! Careful to choose the right thickness for the size of your bead - you want to be able to fit a few pieces into the hole. I tend to use three but any number works, although odd numbers usually look better.



3. This bit can be optional but I think it adds an awesome alien texture. Using a pin or bit of paperclip, carefully place dots of the Plastic Putty or Liquid Greenstuff in concentric circles down the sides of the bead. Start from the hole at the top and work your way down, aiming to keep them fairly evenly spaced.



4. The fronds need a little more bulk at the ends to look convincing - you can go about this in a few different ways. I use superglue sprayed with a squirt of accelerator to set it instantly, but you could achieve a similar effect with a few layers of Nurgles Rot or PVA.
5. You're done! From here you can blend it into the base a little with putty, add extra mushrooms or texture the base as normal.

The Truffer's Tale

THE TRUFFLER'S TALE

One day, the Truffer was off hunting for mushrooms.

She was rather well liked by the battalion she cooked for...

But there were some who were more hungry than they were patient.

The wicked pair stole her foragings and ate them where none would discover their misdeed.

"I feel a bit strange Barnaby..."

While a Truffer might cook for a camp, not all the mushrooms they gather are for eating.



Enoki Knights

In the pursuit of treasure and glory they march. What grows in the blood-soaked soil amid the discarded husks of forgotten warriors?

Shane Brockway has kindly [under duress] provided a guide to his Enoki Knights, his own Regiment of elite fighting horrors.

Materials Required:

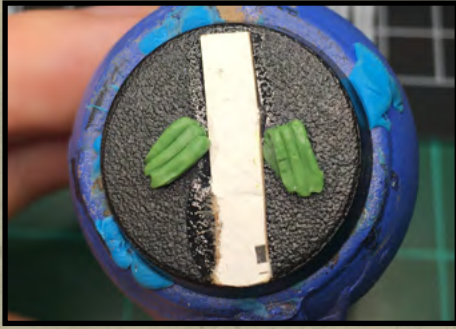
- Green Stuff
- Perry Miniatures Foot Knights (1450-1500)
- Toothpicks
- Micro beads
- Pin vice drill

1. I start with a Perry Miniatures Foot Knight

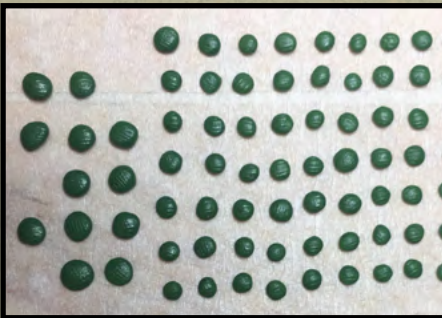
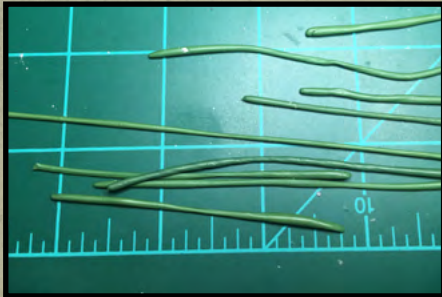


I remove the feet, cut the torso in half and drill a hole in each section to secure a section of a toothpick. This will extend the body and make it appear overgrown.

2. I then sculpt simple feet with Green Stuff (no need to be perfect as they aren't human), and split them into 3 toes/roots.



3. Next I prep all the Green Stuff pieces I'll need. I roll out elongated strips of various thickness, which will be used for stems. I take various sized balls and just slightly squish them with my finger for the mushroom caps.



4. Now I add some extra roots to the feet and start chopping those prepped stems adding them to the waist and neck area.



5. I take some styrene tube and extend the arms to give some space for more stems, just like the waist.

Then I make quick and dirty rondels (armour plating), and as I want them to be rusty I opt to go for something speedy and simple and just press in some rivet balls to give the paint something to cling to later on.



6. Now I attach the rondels and glue some more stems to the gap in the shoulders.



7. Lastly, I glue in the mushroom caps and my Enoki knight is complete.







Ashigaru

The ground shakes, the Rootlings shrink back into their holes, and the Squabbles take to the sky as a mountain moves out of the mist. On the shell of an enormous turtle is a patchwork of knotted roots and the corpses from a millennium of conflict. A county-sized behemoth has come to visit Cist.

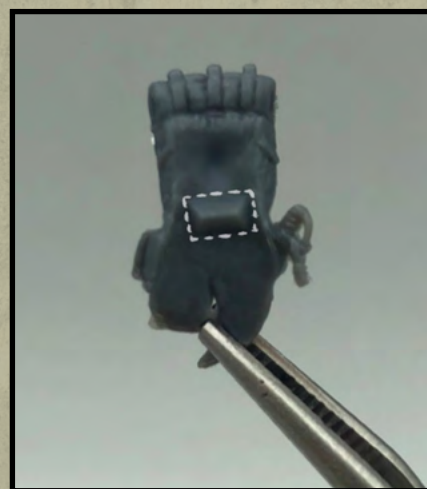
Mike James and his wonderful Rootshido Regiment have inspired many in our community to take up arms in a feudal Japanese flavour. We have poached him for this issue to give us some hints on how he created his bedraggled Ashigaru.

Materials Required:

- Perry Miniatures French Elite Companies
- Perry Agincourt French Foot Knights
- Warlord Games Ashigaru
- Twigs dried in the Oven
- Vallejo rough grey pumice



1. Assemble the Ashigaru legs and body.
2. Attach a pair of arms from the French Elite Companies kit. There will be some gaps but that's ok, those can all be cleaned up with twigs and pumice later.



3. Pick out a French Elite Companies backpack and remove the small plastic tab on the lower portion with a scalpel.



4. Attach the modified backpack to Ashigaru body, making sure a small amount sits above their shoulders.



5. Then take an Ashigaru head and shave the face off so the surface is flat.



6. Take a bascinet from the Agincourt Foot Knights box and remove the tabs from the top sides so that it fits on the Ashigaru head.
7. Glue the head with the bascinet onto the body.

We could stop now and we would have a great figure, perfect for filling out a Unit of Fodder, but if we follow the next step we can take it to the next level.



8. Take some of your oven dried twigs and clip them to a desired size.

Superglue some oven-dried twigs to the top of the backpack.



Add Vallejo rough grey pumice around the shoulders and twigs and bam! Your Daimyo will be proud.



Rootlings

The Roots give birth to all manner of foul offspring. Rootlings are the most common, pottering about and making mischief. Rootling is a colloquial term for the varied squat and diminutive creatures of the marsh. A nuisance to all, they are often easily shooed away, but when swarming in great numbers pose a real threat to the many Regiments attempting to cross the marsh.

Brendon Jakubowski has delighted us with his Rootling conversions. Using the techniques shown here, try experimenting with other small models as a base. Rootlings can come in all shapes and sizes.

Materials Required:

- Greenstuff
- Games Workshop Nurgling
- Games Workshop Barbed Bracken
- Various sculpting tools
- Pin vice drill

1. Cut out the pieces you require from the Sprues and make some simple Root shapes out of Green stuff.



2. Superglue the Nurgling to a base. You're going to need something to hold onto when sculpting so you don't touch and ruin parts you've already done.



3. Cut back the horns on the Nurgling and any other parts you don't want. Grab your pin vice and drill holes on the top of the head where you want the leaves to go.



4. Snip out a number of the smaller Barbed Bracken leaves and cut back the stems until you have something similar to the picture.



5. Glue the pieces of Barbed Bracken to the head of the Nurgling using the holes you drilled earlier.



6. Grab some of the premade roots, making sure they are cured and cut them to your desired size. Superglue them onto the Nurgling until you're happy.



7. Mix up some greenstuff (about 60% yellow to 40% blue) and use your sculpting tools to smooth it over the Nurgling to hide the joins and get a rough shape for the Rootling.



8. Continue smoothing and shaping the greenstuff and start to add more details like bumps and wrinkles. Using a hobby knife, cut a line for the mouth.



9. Continue to add more details and wrinkles. Using a hobby knife or sculpting tool, add tiny grooves in the mouth for added details. Allow 24 hours to dry and your Rootling is done.



BOGFOOT & ONIONS THE TOWER

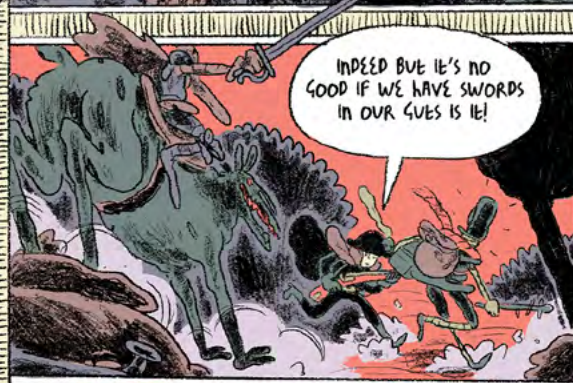


BLIMEY M'LORD! WE SHOULD HAVE STOLEN A HORSE TOO!

WE'RE ONLY IN THIS POSITION BECAUSE OF YOUR STICKY FINGERS!



HAVE PITY ON ME! I JUST CAN'T HELP MYSELF WITH SUCH FANCY THINGS...



INDEED BUT IT'S NO GOOD IF WE HAVE SWORDS IN OUR GUES IS IT!



BUT IF WE MAKE IT TO THAT TOWER WE CAN FIGHT THEM ON OUR OWN TERMS!

THOOM



I SUSPECT WE'VE LURED OUR PURSUERS INTO A RIVAL'S TERRITORY!

BOOM



COUNT CONRAD'S CANNONBALL CAVALRY!

FOOM



THEY'RE PRETTY SPRY BUT THEY CAN'T SHOOT FOR BEANS.

FOOM

HOORAY! THEY SUCKERED THAT ONE THOUGH!



I WAS AIMING FOR YOU!



HECK! HE'S BECOMING A RICH BARNEY!



LISE'S MERCY!
THEY'VE WIPED EACH
OTHER OUT!



NOT
QUIET...

NO ONE ENTERS
THE SACRED TOWER
AND LIVES...



MUD.



DO YOU
FEEL THAT?

RUMBLE
RUMBLE



BLESSED
RAPTURE!



THE
SACRED TOWER
RISES!!



RAAAAGH!!

CHOMP



CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH



SPLASH



ACTUALLY...

LET'S NOT
GO IN...

BURRRPPP....



Root Rider

The Bastard wheeled, slicing down with their sabre as the root steed stamped its fibrous hooves. Decapitating a screeching zealot's proboscis they turned to their father for acknowledgement. Sprayed with gore and sap the patriarchal Toady hawked a flem soaked carrot at a stump and sneered.

Tom's Bastards are beautiful realisations of root steeds. Half animal, half vegetable.

Materials Required:

- Perry Miniatures Napoleonic French Heavy Cavalry.
- Perry Miniatures English Men at Arms. (Visors only)
- Brass thumb tacks. Spiky bit.
- Pin vice drill.
- Various sculpting tools.
- Micro beads.
- Super glue, plastic glue.
- Citadel Armageddon Dunes, Martian Ironearth.
- Milliput, Polyfilla.



Rider

1. Assemble the Heavy Cavalry horse and rider.
2. Carve away the helm of the rider until a visor fits snugly. Remove small amounts at a time checking the fit as you go.



3. Using Milliput, sculpt a beak on the front of the visor. When dry, this can be smoothed with a sharp hobby knife. Carefully apply a lacquer of superglue.

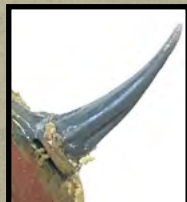


4. Take a thumb tack and clip off half of the pin. Drill a hole into the centre of the rider's left forearm and attach the thumb tack.

Smooth over any visible pin weld with Milliput. Apply few coats of Martian Ironearth and sculpt a Milliput root.

Steed

1. Clip off the horse's tail and replace it with a suitable plastic spike.
2. With a hobby knife carve the hooves into sharp claws.



3. Remove the tail, mane, ears, eyes and nostrils of the horse, leaving the straps intact. Smooth out with Milliput.



4. Add micro beads to create the eerie eyes of your Beast.
5. Create thin tapering sausages of Milliput. Smooth them into place with a sculpting tool, then lacquer again with superglue. Do this in stages, leaving time for them to cure before adding more.



6. Shave some curls from your heavy Cavalry sprue using a hobby knife. Create a plume using the shavings and glue it to the steed's head.
7. Finally texture the steed's body and the riders boots with pollyfilla. When this is dry apply Armageddon Dunes all over and then Martian Ironearth in patches.







The Swelling Season

By
Josh Reynolds

Oily rain wept down across the city of Grint. It sheeted across the lumpen rooftops, eddying in crepuscular gutters before cascading down into the muddy streets below. Ilse crouched in the lee of a tottering chimney with a sodden hood pulled low over her face. Below her, the city slept, dreaming sad, fitful dreams.

A flock of smog-jays swooped by overhead, shrieking raucously in the rain. Ilse ignored their gibbering and reached into her overcoat, feeling for the last fibrous strands of tuber stowed in her holey pockets. Gnawing and suckling at the tough strands of tuber, she leaned against the precarious stacked bricks of the chimney and watched the marsh-mist spill through the tangled glut of narrow streets below.

Grint was a pimple on the earth, rising higher with every passing decade. The mud beneath its ancient and crumbling foundations was ever-greedy, forcing the citizenry to build up as well as out, as older structures were drawn deep into the mire of Cist.

Worse, they were squeezed between the mire and the murk. For even as the mud lapped at the foundations, the rain rotted the roofs, forcing the folk of Grint into a war of attrition against the very land they called home. Despite this, they were content. The root had been good to Grint, for all that it sought to devour them. Things might be miserable, but they had always been miserable. In a way, it was a comfort.

Absently, Ilse tapped her fingers against the rusty set of pruning shears that hung from around her neck. They were as sharp as any blade.



They had to be, to prune the thick growths that spilled across the highest reaches of the city. Her eyes strayed out across the myriad convolutions of the rooftops as she popped another strand of tuber into her mouth.

From above, Grint resembled a squelchy expanse of marshland, its softly palpating surface broken only by the occasional defiant turret or smoke-belching chimney. Bunches of tangled, darkly swollen root latticed along the peaks and gutters, making it seem as if the city were all of one piece.

The roof-root was how she made her precarious living; or, rather, the nubby buds thereof. Chewing them could clear the head of malodours and brewing them for drink could rinse the gut clean,

something the folk of Grint were ever in need of – and would pay gladly to get. Especially this time of year, when the rain fell for days on end, making everything smell of piss and rot. The folk of Grint knew it as the swelling season, when the churning mud rose and the roof-roots became swollen and plump.

It was the best time to harvest the buds, when they were at their most potent. It was also the most dangerous. Between the rain and surging mud, the city often shook like an old man afflicted with palsy. One wrong step, and her harvesting days would be done.

She paused and looked down at her empty fingers. She'd eaten the last of her root without noticing. The pangs began almost at once and she gripped her stomach. Living up here, she'd taken to supplementing her sparse meals with slices of stem and stolon. Unwise, perhaps, given that she now couldn't seem to go more than a day without tasting it, unless she wished to endure excruciating pain. Folk ate the root, and the root ate the folk. That was the way of it.

The thought of it made her mouth water, and she rose to her feet, snagging her lantern as she did so. It was time to harvest. Snicking her shears, she made her way along the ridge of the roof, sniffing the air for the sickly-sweet scent of the blooming buds.

When she caught a whiff of the aroma, she eagerly scuttled towards a swollen twist of taproot, emerging from within a dormant chimney. Her shears snick-snacked and clipped loose a fleshy nodule. She held it up, studying her prize in the dim, wet light of her lantern.

It resembled the bulb of a particularly repellent parsnip, and leaked a pus-like juice when she gave it a gentle squeeze. Eagerly she cut into it, exposing what looked to be a lump of human hair and teeth. A ripe one. She nibbled it as she got to work on the rest.

She'd harvested almost a pocketful of the warty buds when she heard the tromp of many feet, heading north. Curious now, she crawled as close as she dared to the edge of the roof and peered down, hoping to get a look at whoever was causing such a racket.

A horde of people marched through the boggy city square, dispersing the fog and throwing up a chaotic scramble of shadows across the broken walls of Grint. Those villagers unlucky enough to be out and about flattened themselves against any available surface, hoping to avoid the notice of the newcomers. Ilse didn't blame them.

The marchers were an unruly and scabrous lot; clad in filth-caked clothing and rusted armor, they made for an unsettling sight. Many were hunched and broken of form; some limped along, dragging twisted limbs behind them. A steady grumbling rose from their ranks, blotting out the normal sounds of the city at night. Some hauled rickety carts behind them, and twitching bodies lay in the backs of some these conveyances, where they endured the attentions of beak-masked quacks.

Ilse watched the procession in wide-eyed awe. She'd seen regiments before, of course. But only ever at a distance, marching along the old marsh road. Up close, they seemed altogether less inspiring – disappointing, even. In fact, there were a great many stained bandages, broken weapons and crumpled shakos among the rank and file. They huddled against one another, as if seeking comfort in the presence of their fellows.

Ilse recognized the signs easily enough. The pubs were full of beaten men most nights. She frowned. There'd been a rumbling and groaning somewhere south of the city the night before. A battle, then. And these were the losers. They'd likely come looking for shelter; something they'd find precious little of in Grint. The city barely tolerated its own inhabitants.

Yet even as the thought crossed her mind, her nose detected a strange miasma, not altogether displeasing, rising from their ranks. Ilse's nostrils twitched as she detected the pungency of unfamiliar roots, and she began to salivate. She thrust the remainder of the bud she'd been eating into her mouth and chewed noisily as she scampered along a parallel course to the newcomers. It did little to satiate her hunger.

It was said that regiments often brought with them strange roots and cuttings, for they were as much pilgrims as soldiers. Her stomach twisted with desire at the thought of foreign food. Maybe they'd be willing to part with some, in trade - or better yet, she could just take it. They'd never notice a morsel or two missing, surely. She licked her lips at the thought.



The smell grew stronger the longer she followed them. The macabre procession came to a halt in front of the Tap Root, Grint's only inn. One of the men at the front banged on the shutters with a club, rousing the proprietor and his family. "Open up - open up in the name of Old Father Mandrake," he bellowed at the top of his lungs. The proprietor, fat old Tagarzy, with his fibrous beard and warty nodules, hurriedly wrenched open the doors, letting out a spill of warm light. He froze at the sight of what awaited him.

From within the ranks of the procession, a strange figure hopped forward. A squat, toadlike mutant, clad in what looked like a befouled rabbit costume, adorned with epaulets and ribbons of merit. A filthy wig decorated the creature's sloped skull, and it - he - adjusted it as he gazed up at Tagarzy in apparent bonhomie. "We require rooms, good innkeeper," the mutant croaked. "And libations! I require your finest bucket of squench - and a bowl of squeezings, if such a delicacy is to be had in this burg."

"M-my lord, I-I-I..." Tagarzy began, in his usual obsequious fashion. One of the toad's companions thumped him in his belly, and shoved him back inside.

The toad wobbled in after. "Many thanks, kind publican," he burred. "Your generosity does you much credit." He turned. "Get the toff inside," he said as several men carefully extricated a foetal shape from one of the carts. As they jostled the shape, it gave out a piteous groan and raised a shaggy head. Ilse tensed.

For an instant, she'd thought the man - for it was a man - had looked right at her, and she felt a sudden squirming in her guts. The root-bud in her mouth tasted like ashes and she almost spit it out before thinking better of it.

"More carefully than that, or I'll peel you like a potato," the mutant barked. As they brought the injured party inside, he closed the door behind them, plunging the street back into darkness. Ilse wondered what was going on. A prisoner, perhaps - or an injured officer. The latter seemed more likely, given the fawning consideration they were showing.

The rest of the regiment seemed content to hunker down in the street, or roust the local shopkeepers for shelter. Doors were thumped and shutters rattled as the newcomers burst into whatever homes were not sufficiently secured.

Belatedly, Ilse recalled another tradition of the swelling season. It was this time of year that the regiments came hunting for recruits. They rarely stopped at Grint, but this lot seemed to have had little choice - if they'd recently been handed a defeat, they might need replacements for their casualties. She hunched low, hoping to avoid notice. She had little inclination to join a regiment. Bud-harvesting was dangerous enough.

At the thought, she sniffed the air again. The miasma - the sweet stench - had risen most strongly from whomever had been carried inside, and it had vanished with them. The inn only had a few rooms worth the name, and all of them overlooked the alley. The injured man was certain to be in one of them. She crept across the Tap Root's twisty, squelching roof towards the alley, imagining what it would taste like - would it be sweet, or bitter? Salty or sour? She wanted to know - needed to know.

Despite this burgeoning need, she hesitated, wondering at her own foolhardiness. Was a taste of some strange root really worth the risk? Her stomach grumbled and, throwing caution to the wind, she clambered down towards the first window. The descent was tricky, thanks to the falling rain, but she was able to reach the shutters without losing her grip.

She paused, hanging from subsidence shifted stones like an overgrown, if somewhat malnourished, newt. Despite the falling rain, she could hear voices within. As she'd hoped, they'd taken the uppermost room. It was the best in the inn, often reserved for travellers of substance - not that there were many of those this time of year. She leaned close, listening, praying they would leave sooner rather than later.

"We should go now," a voice grumbled. "Scarper while we've got the chance."

"And what about him, then?" Another voice replied. "He's not going anywhere with his belly all burst open like that. Are we just to leave him?"

"Yes," said the first voice. "That's exactly what we should do. Leave the whole bloody lot of them. Only slow us down, the laggards."

"If Tod heard you speaking like this, he'd pull your weaselly black guts out and wear them like a scarf," said the second voice.

"Tod ain't here, is he? He's downstairs, singing about victories he was never part of. Damn sellsword. He's not one of us, no matter how much he licks the Captain's boots. Soon as the money runs out, he'll be off back to his mum with the regimental rhizomes..."

"We already ate all those. And he's the one what got us out and away from those cannibal bastards -"

The first voice interrupted. "Only because he ran away and the rest of us followed!" A disgusted sigh. "Anyway, we didn't get away. We just delayed the inevitable. They'll be here come first light, if not earlier. We only whet their appetites. That's why we need to go. Let Tod fight them, if he's spoiling for it."

There was a wheeze and a creak of wood, as if someone were sitting up in bed. "Are you so fearful then, Barnaby?" The new voice was a harsh rasp.

"C-Captain? I thought you were sleeping..." the first voice began.

"We go nowhere," the harsh voice interjected. "Not while I'm in charge. Not while I hold the holy root." A rattling cough followed this declaration, and a creak of hinges. There was a thin scream, the sort a small animal might make, and then silence. Curses and groans followed, then the sound of something metal snapping shut.

The harsh voice spoke again. "We will not leave until the regiment is once more at full strength. Until every fallen body is replaced. Only then shall we march." A chorus of muttered agreements greeted this statement. "Good," the harsh voice said. "Leave me. And let there be no more cowardly talk."

Ilse heard the sound of boots on the creaking floorboards, and the groan of someone in pain. Then, silence. She waited, perched on the narrow sill, gnawing absently on a root-bud. When she was certain that whoever was in the room was asleep, she pried the shutters open with her shears. The wood was soft with damp, and made little sound save a tinny squealing. A candle burned next to the bed, painting the room with a dull, hazy glow.

There was little in the room save a rough wooden bed, a reeking chamber pot and a single chair next to the window. The door was closed. Dripping with rainwater, she climbed in. She sniffed the air, and that same sweet stink greeted her. It was stronger here, almost cloying in the confines of the room. It drew her in.

She crept towards the bed, wondering how she was going to find it. All thought of caution was wiped away when she spied the locket draped across the

pillow. It was a small thing, tarnished and dented. She used the tip of her shears to lift it and saw that the chain was still around the sleeper's scrawny neck.

By the light of the candle, she examined the man - older, face mostly hidden in a thicket of hair and finely greased mustachios. Thin nodules of pallid matter emerged from the thick hair and studded his cheeks, chin and hands - a sure sign of the rooty growths. The man was still clothed in a malodourous uniform, save for his mossy officer's coat, which lay in a heap on the floor, beside a dented helm with a beaked visor.

A steamy, ripe odor rose from his belly, which was stained a dark red and seemed altogether the wrong shape. As Ilse watched, something moved within, and the sleeping man gave a faint groan of protest. Ilse swallowed the last of her root-bud and turned her attentions to the locket.

Ilse gave an experimental tug, but the locket wasn't going anywhere. She bit her lip and opened the shears, ready to cut through the rusted chain. The smell of whatever was in the locket was driving her mad. She wanted it - needed it.

The shears bit into the metal with a sound that set her teeth to itching. It took two bites to sever the links. But sever it she did. She scooped up the locket with trembling hands and pried it open. Inside, a twist of root the size of her pinkie. In the wavering light of the candle, she thought it was almost...man-shaped.

It turned its head to look at her, and gave a thin, shrill scream. Startled, Ilse stumbled over the helmet, sending it clattering across the floor. She heard the tell-tale squelch of a sabre being drawn from a damp sheath, and saw the dull gleam of rusted metal arcing towards her at an awkward - if deadly - angle. The room's occupant had awoken - and he was not best pleased.

"Thief!"

Ilse ducked aside as the sword bit deep into the bed post, and scrambled for the window. The root in the locket continued to wail, even after she snapped it shut. She paid little attention to it, however. Her only thought was to escape with her prize.

But even as she reached the window, a brambly paw fell upon her coat and wrenched her backwards. "Get back here," the locket's owner rasped. Ilse went for her shears, but she was flung to the floor and they clattered from her grip. The root in the locket ceased its wailing, as if shocked by the suddenness of it all.

The door burst inward. She was surrounded in moments, her world reduced to a ring of blades and mallets. Twisted faces glared at her from behind these implements. "Assassin," one of them croaked. She recognized the toadlike mutant, in his filthy rabbit costume - but armed this time, with a tarnished pistol.

"I - I was just collecting root-buds," Ilse stammered. She cursed her idiot greed. She glanced at the window, but knew she wouldn't make it.

"Murderer," another growled. "He tried to kill Captain Snurl."

"I didn't," Ilse protested.

"We all saw it!" He bared brown teeth and prodded Ilse in the kidney with the bent tip of a rusted bayonet. Ilse winced.

"Not a murderer. Just a thief." This from the room's occupant - Snurl. He stood on unsteady legs with one hand pressed to his belly. He took the locket from Ilse's unresisting hands. "And not a very good thief either." He coughed, and the others flinched.

"I didn't - I wasn't..." Ilse's eyes followed the locket. "It just smelled so good."

Snurl staggered. "Tod...help me, please." The mutant hurried over and helped the injured man to the bed. The others shifted uncomfortably, looking as if they wished they were anywhere else.

"The worthless scrapings of this city obviously sent her to kill the captain," the one with the brown teeth said. "Probably unhappy with how many of their folk we're pressing into service. We should make an example of her. Teach them not to raise a hand to their betters." He gave a malicious grin. "Peel her like a parsnip, says I."

"No, let's string her up," the other burred, thumping his mallet into Ilse's stomach with playful glee. He scratched at the root-like hairs that decorated his almost non-existent chin. "Let her dance outside the window."

The one with the brown teeth shrugged. "Fine by me. Find some rope and let's be done with it."

"No," Snurl rasped.

"But my lord, surely -" the one with the growths on his chin began.

"Was I not speaking clearly, Aloysius?" Von Snurl sat up in the bed, his malformed features arranged in an expression of stern reproach. He coughed again, and Ilse saw that the wound in his belly was leaking, staining everything a dark hue. "The root drew her here. Else why would she come in at all?"

"She's a thief, obviously," the one with the brown teeth snarled. "Look at her!"

"I am, Barnaby. Are you?" Snurl countered. "She is practically salivating. She smelled the root from outside the room. That tells me all I need to know."

"You are badly hurt my lord," Barnaby pressed, eyes narrowed. "Your faculties are no doubt rattled by your narrow escape. You cannot mean what I think you mean."



Ilse looked back and forth between them, at a loss.

"And if I do, Barnaby?" Snurl said, in a low voice.

"She is not fit. She is barely a scrap of peeling, not worth chewing. It should be one of us - not Tod, obviously." Barnaby looked at the mutant. "No offense."

"None taken," Tod said, in a tone that indicated otherwise.

"You wish to take up my baton then, Barnaby?" Snurl indicated his sabre, hanging from the bedpost. "Here it is. Come and have it."

Barnaby glanced at Aloysius, who shook his head rapidly. Barnaby glowered at his fellow officer and spat, "Coward." He took a step towards the bed.

Snurl lifted the locket and popped it open. The rootling within stretched itself like a bestirred cat and gave a shrill wowl that set Barnaby and the others to clutching

their heads and cursing in obvious pain.

All save Ilse. For her, the sound was piercing but not painful. No, rather, it was beautiful. Unconsciously, she reached towards the locket, and Snurl snapped it shut. The singing ceased. Barnaby and Aloysius stared at her in confusion and loathing.

"What -?" Barnaby began.

"As I said," Snurl intoned. "She hears the song of Old Father Mandrake, the same as me." He looked down at his belly, and a sad smile contorted his ugly features. He pressed a hand to his wound and Ilse thought she saw the man's shirt twitch, as if something beneath it were growing agitated. "Only one who can listen without fear is fit to bear the Mandrake. Only one who hears its song, is fit to taste of it."

Snurl sagged suddenly, as if weary. "Tod..." he coughed.

Tod cleared his throat - a horrible sound. He gestured to the door. "Out, the pair of you. Our innkeeper has several stout sons. Mayhap they might wish to join a regiment as storied as this one, eh?"

"And who are you to order us about, you squamous croaker?" Barnaby growled, glaring down at the mutant. Tod cocked his pistol with purposeful deliberateness. Barnaby blinked and glanced down at his bayonet, and then back at the pistol. "Oh," he added, hurriedly. "My mistake."

He and Aloysius crept out, with much muttering and baleful looks. Tod closed to door and waited attentively. Ilse looked at the mutant, and then at his master - or, rather at what his master held. Though the locket was closed, she imagined she could hear snatches of the Mandrake's song. She wiped her mouth absently.

"What is your name, girl?" Snurl asked.

"Ilse. What - what happened to you?" Ilse gestured.

"Injured. In battle. It happens. I do not think you care about me, however." Snurl let the locket swing. Ilse watched it, unable to look away. "Do you wish to join the regiment, Ilse? Our ranks are much depleted, and we could use you."

Ilse trembled. "I'm not a soldier."
 "Neither was I, once. I grubbed in the mud, until I heard the song of the Mandrake. Until I smelled its sweet smell and learned the joy of the eternal march."

"The march?"

"The root, child. It commands us to march. Where we march, the soil is tilled and watered. Where we die, it is fertilized. Where the regiment goes, so too does the root. We carry it in us, and it in turn fills our bellies and our hearts. The root bids us march, and so we march." Snurl smiled. "What do you do, girl?"

"I...harvest roof-buds." Ilse gestured to his shears, still laying where they'd fallen. She reached into her pocket for one, but her fumbling yielded nothing. She'd eaten them all. She licked her lips, stomach knotting unpleasantly.

"No roof-bud is as sweet as Old Father Mandrake, I warrant," Snurl intoned, lifting the locket. "The father-root, the mother-root, the blessed cutting from which all others come. It calls to you, don't it?" He fixed Ilse with a calculating eye. "Aye, it does. I see the hunger in your eyes - a holy hunger." He heaved himself up, panting. His bandages had leaked, staining his waistcoat and britches.

Ilse licked his lips. "Just a bite," she murmured. "Just a nibble." She rubbed her stomach. "Just a bit to ease the cramps. Please."

Snurl gave a wheezing laugh. "It's not for the nibbling, lass, but the swallowing whole. The test is in whether you choke on it." His hand trembled, and the locket swayed. Ilse followed it with her eyes. She could hear the perfect tuber shape within crooning her name, inviting her to take a bite of its flesh.

Ilse reached out for it, and Snurl jerked it back, out of reach. She froze as Tod raised his pistol. "Not for the taking," he croaked, not unkindly.

"Tod's right - 'tis not for the taking, but the giving. Shall I give it to you, Ilse?" Snurl's eyes gleamed with an unhealthy light. "Shall I let you taste the Mandrake?"

Ilse fumbled for the right words. She was not used to talking, not for any length of time. Her tongue felt thick, and her mouth was full of saliva. She swallowed and said, "Yes. Oh yes, please."

Snurl sighed and laid back. "Very well." His gaze flicked to Tod and he indicated his sword. "Take that and wait outside. See that no one enters."

Tod bobbed on his splayed feet, rabbit ears flopping. "Aye, Captain." He hefted the sabre, but paused at the door. The bulbous yellow eyes gazed at Ilse with what she thought might be pity. Then the mutant was outside and closing the door behind him, cutting off the shouted inquiries of the toadies on the stairs.

Snurl caught his expression and chuckled. "Fear not. They will not harm you, whatever happens. The root has chosen you, and none may gainsay Old Father Mandrake. Not if they are wise." With palsied fingers, he cracked open the locket, exposing the tiny manlike shape within. It trilled and clutched at his fingertips in a grotesque parody of affection. "My predecessor called himself Inquisitor. I, having no holy pretensions, named myself Captain. If you survive,

you may title yourself as best suits you.”

Old Father Mandrake crawled onto Von Snurl’s palm, and stood erect – a miniscule colossus, reeking sweetly. Oh, so sweetly. Ilse came forward hesitantly, but eagerly nonetheless. She reached out, and the root did not resist as she took it in her hand and popped it into her mouth with a joyful groan.

She felt it twitch and writhe as she chewed, and heard its thin cries – was that pain? Ecstasy? She could not say. She knew only that it was still moving as it slid down her throat. A moment later, the pain hit. Or was it pleasure?

It was excruciating, regardless. A sudden sharpness, stabbing into every nerve at once. She groaned and fell to her knees. Snurl was on his feet, watching. “The pain is good,” he wheezed. “It is the root of strength. Grip it, grasp it, uproot it. Claim it, as you must claim your captaincy. The regiment must have a toff. It must have fodder and chaff. Like the root, the regiment must grow and march – else it will wither, and be lost to the mud.”

The words beat at Ilse’s ears like thunder. She fell forward, her face bouncing painfully off of the floor. Everything hurt. It felt like a hot coal was twisting in her bowels. She rolled over and tore at her belly with numb fingers. Her heels drummed on the floor as she squeezed her eyes shut.

Images flooded her mind. She saw the snap of a firing line, hurling leaden death at the approaching enemy. She heard the rattle of drums, and the splash of boots in the mud.

She felt the questing roots beneath the mud, clutching at her ankles, trying to drag her down. She smelled smoke, and rot, and blood and other indescribable things.

A hundred images, a hundred battles, a hundred lifetimes slammed into her, one after the next. She saw immense, godlike shapes, staggering through a pestilent mist, and heard the croaking

of mire-hogs. She felt the breeze of shot, and the shock of her blade meeting that of her opponent. Her thoughts cracked beneath the weight of what she was being shown, and the shards of her were gathered up and jostled about by what was growing within her. She felt herself strung like garland upon a great, pallid root that nestled in her mind and soul.

More images, more visions of what had been or what was yet to be – it all blurred into the same. As steady as the seasons, death and rebirth. Where did she end and the root begin?

Ilse had no answer. But she no longer desired one. She was the root, and the root was her. That was enough. Her eyes sprang open. The room was dark. The candle had gone out at some point. Snurl lay cold and flaccid on the bed. Having seen out his last duty the old officer had taken his final breath. Ilse rose shakily to her feet. Vomit stained her chest and face, but her stomach no longer heaved; her bowels no longer burned. She touched her stomach, and heard a soft sound in her mind’s ear – a trill of contentment...and a command as Old Father Mandrake told her what to do next.

She retrieved her shears and bent over Snurl’s body. A snick and a snack, and then she was rooting through the red soil of Snurl’s body for what she knew she would find. What she must find. She could not be keeper of the holy root without a root to keep. Thankfully, it was not difficult to locate.

She extracted the small squirming shape, so like that which she had devoured and yet somehow different. Not Old Father Mandrake this, but a young rootling, newly scrounged and stinking of the death that had birthed it – Young Mother Mandrake.

It squalled piteously as she stuffed it into the locket, its voice almost a shrill echo of Snurl’s own, though softer and more

feminine. It would learn, in time, as she would learn. And when the day came that she was no longer fit for purpose, it would be devoured and that which now grew within her would be consigned to the locket in its turn, to sing for whoever came after. Father, mother, it made no difference. They were all part of an unbroken root, stretching through uncounted days. And now she was part of it.

She dressed herself in Snurl's clothes. They were finer than anything she'd ever owned before, despite the smell. Somehow, they fit her, though she'd been certain the dead man was taller. She hesitated before she put on the helmet, however. Some instinct warned her that to do so would be a somehow irrevocable choice.

The helmet was rusty and sharp in places, the visor gummed shut with a treacle-like smear of something. The plumes that had once decorated its top now nothing more than pallid veins that flopped like the stalk of some silvery tuber. Worse, it stank of a dying man's last breath. A shrinking part of her wanted to toss it aside. In her gut, the Mandrake gave a trill of encouragement.

Ilse pulled the helmet on. It fit perfectly. The weight of it settled onto her, and she tightened the myriad straps and buckles that would hold it in place as easily as if she had done it a hundred times before.

When she'd finished, she stared down at the red ruin on the bed. When the regiment departed, it would likely be consigned to the mulch pile the innkeeper kept out back. Folk ate the root, and the root ate the folk.

She thought Snurl would approve.

Ilse hauled open the door and stepped out into the corridor. The gathered toadies started, as if they'd seen a ghost. "My lord?"

Barnaby rasped, gaping up at her. His rusty bayonet hung forgotten in his hand. He paused, and then corrected himself.

"My lady?"

"Yes," Ilse said. "I am."

Tod gave a bellicose whoop and hopped forward, nearly tripping over his feet. He lifted the sabre in its crumbling sheath. Ilse took the weapon and the fibrous matter of the hilt entwined about her fingers with something that might have been curiosity - or invitation. She welcomed it, and belted the blade to her hip.

Barnaby and Aloysius looked at one another, and then bowed. "You're looking better, my lady," Barnaby simpered. "Puffy as a mushroom."

"Puffier," Aloysius added, in a servile tone.

Without a word, Ilse made her way downstairs and out into the muddy city square. Her new toadies - and Tod - stumbled after him, dazed and bemused. Men and women waited in bedraggled ranks their worm-riddled muskets laid across their shoulders. They set up a brittle cheer as they caught sight of her. If they noticed any difference in their toff, they gave no sign.

Something compelled her to raise the locket high, and the cheering swelled to raucous heights. Several soldiers, unable to contain themselves, broke into an impromptu jig.

"Orders, my lady?" Tod croaked, at her elbow.

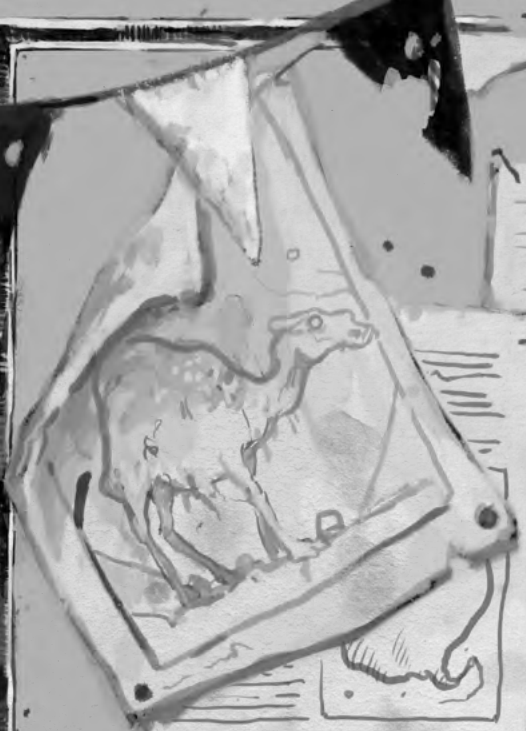
Ilse took in the crumbling roofs of Grint one last time and squared her shoulders. The rootling inside the locket was singing softly. She smiled.

"We march."



Fodder Required

NO LUMPIES



Have you thought about Radishes?

WANTED
TOD

Visit Burke

Root Snuff

SEARCHERS
Walking
Island
Spotted

ABOUT
TURNIPS

Don
Sneg's
Fightin'
Cels
SCUM

JOIN
THE
RANK

大根

WHERE
ARE OUR
CANNON?

Silhouettes on
the Horizon
LANCERS

SEE YOU NEXT SEASON

THIS IS
VANSNEG