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# Blacktooth Grin

## *PLAYER'S GUIDE*

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Written and edited by Margar and Faquarl, with contributions by “Big Louie” Louzzik, the Smashblade, and helpful input from numerous others.

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## Prologue: A Gathering by Torchlight

You hear the distant drums, beating like dying hearts in the gray-green fog of the Black Morass. Or, what remains of it, stretched out between you and the distant sea, this bone-strewn swamp of sorrows. The narrow mountain pass, littered with sun-bleached skeletons, crawls down into that hungry fog. Spiders skitter and scrape their hacksaw kneecaps in the vine-wrapped Cyprus groves, and serpents coil and slither in the muck. You descend along the road, the lifeless gray of Deadwind Pass behind you, into the Sorrowmurk.

The fog inches up your leg, thick as a dying breath in Winterspring, and the drums rage on in the distance. Honor beats and the rattle of axes on shields sound out in that din. Cries of pain and rage, and frenzied roars of laughter echo through the murk, and bog beasts slog at the edge of your vision. What madness calls this home?

What madness rejects the strength and safety of Orgrimmar? Your journey here began with a sickening, jolting voyage over the ocean from Kalimdor, with plague and panic gripping the crew and cargo, leaving you stranded in the goblin port city of the far south. Weak with fever, you fought your way north, through the lands of the cannibal trolls, wading along the river banks, far from the roads and roaming bands of Human and Kal'dorei, into the claustrophobic nightmare of the Duskwood. Scouts and sentries harried you at every crossing, until you lost yourself in those blue-gray hills. Then, the lifeless void of Deadwind Pass, the rock bridges and barren granite cliffs, exposed to the skies above, and to the gryphon riders of neighboring Darkshire.

What madness wrought this place? Darkshire at your back. To the North, Lakeshire. To the South, Nethergarde, and the boundless sea to the East. Hemmed in at every turn by the human armies. Surrounded in this mire, the Orcs you seek must surely be deranged. Or fanatics. Perhaps both?

The fog eats into your armor and clothing, fills your nose with the stink of wet bones. Your saddle and harness begin to creak, and your Frostwolf mount, a gift from Thrall's clan in Alterac, grows restless as you urge it along.

The drums grow louder now. The cries and roars more crisp. There! Two sentries, standing just off the road, weapons drawn. One, a troll, staring at you down the shaft of an oil-tipped arrow, has ugly runes and scars carved into his face, and burned sigils glow and smoke along his tusks. A third, running up the path. You try to remain calm.

"Looks real enough to me," the troll sentry says. "Go on, then. Up the path, and be quick about it. Grot, take this one to the gates." The second sentry, a hungry looking orc, nods and begins running down the path, beckoning you to follow.

Which you do, quietly, down the trail, past a row of mud-slicked holes in the ground, with ragged blankets and muddy armor in each of them. A bruised and bloodied young elf is near the end of them, on his knees, his back laced with fresh bleeding welts, clawing a new

hole into the mud and roots with his bare hands, face set in iron determination. You begin to hear a throaty chuckle from your guide. Before you, on either side of the trail, hang the partially butchered corpses of unidentified beasts. A lone goblin stands smiling, standing under one of the beasts with a long sharp knife, his hair and face slick with gore. You note with horror a pile of what look to be frostwolf saddles nearby, and scrapings of white fur. The hungry looking orc guide eyes you, then your mount, in turn, but says nothing. He leaves you at the gates, where two battle-scarred sentries hold torches, and turns back into the fog.

As you pass through the gates of the wooden wall, the roars of laughter coming from inside the small fortified camp grow clear and intense. Before you is a sweating crowd, gathered in torchlight, mostly orcs, trolls and goblins, but also some rough looking elves, and Shu'halo--the massive Kalimdorian Minotaur. The crowd, clad in a variety of brutal looking armors and savage but intricate robes, are standing in a circle around a muddy pit. In the center of the pit, a rail thin goblin has crawled up onto the back of one of the massive tauren, holding onto his horns with both hands, legs wrapped in a vice under the shaggy monster's chin, his teeth sunk all the way to the skull at the base of one of the Shu'halo's bloody ears. The Tauren flails, swinging a rusted shovel uselessly over his head as the goblin rips and begins to tear off the flesh of the ear from the rest of its skull.

Howls of laughter resound throughout the encircling crowd, and many of the orcs and trolls scoop up fistfuls of mud and sand, and the occasional stone which they hurl at the two fighting in the middle. The helpless tauren bellows in rage and starts swinging his head violently back and forth until the goblin loses grip of its horns and begins swinging around, jaw still clamped on the bleeding ear. Then, with the horrifying grisly sound of ripping flesh, the goblin flies, limbs flailing, ear still clamped in its teeth, over the heads of the crowd and into the base of a tree. It lands in the mud amidst the sound of cracking bones and spits the ear out into its hand, then holds the prize above its head to the roar and applause of those gathered.

The Tauren, blind with rage, charges through the gathered throng of onlookers and toward the goblin, horns swinging wildly, the rusted shovel still clamped in his meaty fist. Onlookers dodge and leap to the ground to avoid being impaled. The goblin gawks at its rushing bulk, eyes wide, and scampers up the base of the tree, the bleeding ear clamped, once more, firmly in its mouth. More laughter, as the tauren stands at the base of the massive cypress, bellowing in rage, hooves scraping uselessly at the bark as it tries and fails to clamber up the trunk after the little ear-thief.

“You want this back, you shaggy clod, you gots ta pay!!” The goblin dangles the ear out over a branch, just beyond the reach of the tauren and his rusty shovel. “Gimme the grot shovel or I’ll chew off the other one when you sleep, and then we’ll have to start looking for other souvenirs, you useless oaf.”

The tauren stares for a moment at the shovel, then back up the tree at his ruined ear, and his shoulders sag. He holds up the shovel, and fast as the plague, that goblin swings down and grabs onto the shovel with his feet, simultaneously dropping the ear. The tauren kneels

down and picks it out of the mud, a chewed up bloodied mess. The goblin sneers back down the trunk at him. “You’re gonna need surgery, pal. I can sew that thing back on again, but it’ll cost ya.” The crowd roars again, and some begin to shuffle off into the torchlit fog, the excitement ended and money changing hands as people settle their wagers. Except one, a grisly looking orc with a short gray beard, apparently as old as some of the nearby trees, and just about as ugly, with pitch-black war runes carved into his face above and below his eye sockets, walks over to you through the dispersing crowd, eyeing you with suspicion. He looks down at your white-furred mount, then back at you for a moment.

“You’re not from here, stranger. What business do you have with the Blacktooth Grin?”

# Introduction

## *The Blacktooth Grin.*

One of the largest and oldest clans in the world. Bloodthirsty war criminals living in isolation on the fringes of orcish society. Founders of the Dread Horde and loyal to the line of Blackhand the Destroyer, honoring their ancient orcish traditions. Hardened, disciplined soldiers who forgo the comforts and shelter of the cities in order to carve out an empire with steel and raw will. Savages with missing teeth, conspiring with forbidden and dark powers, sequestered away in what used to be the Black Morass, in the corrosive aura of the Dark Portal, cut off from the moderating influence of Horde society. Fanatical idealists and freedom fighters that simply will not bend their knees to corrupt and weak-willed leaders of Thrall's Horde.

The Blacktooth Grin are all of these, and more.

Rumored to be dead or in decline for longer than most guilds have even existed, "The Grin", as they call themselves, are neither. They remain one of the largest guilds in the world. As the citizens of Darkshire can attest, the Grin has recovered from near complete destruction in years past, is very real, very dangerous, and is growing in strength. The illusion of their decline is due to their insular nature, and their traditional hatred of Thrall, which has long kept them from the streets of Orgrimmar. In fact, they often use this misperception of their forces as a weapon, frustrating larger forces with their strong organization. A proud and free clan steeped in orcish tradition, they nearly never ask outsiders for help in their wars. Even in the face of overwhelming odds, the Blacktooth Grin rarely call out to the soldiers of Orgrimmar or fallen Lordaeron for aid, relying instead on iron discipline and strategy to prevail over superior numbers.

Even among the guilds of the Dread Horde, which was founded by Warlord Faugarl of the Grin, they remain an enigmatic if inspirational clan, who lead by military example and not through politics or posturing.

In the darkest days of recent years, driven and harried before a resurgent and vengeful Stormwind, the Blacktooth Grin, though overwhelmed by the strength of their enemies and beyond the reach of their friends, refused to be broken. Forged in the heat of years of constant and brutal war, deep in the wild lands of the East, the Grin carve out their teeth and their fates with fire and claw and the ring of steel and the hiss of dark magic. They are legends, and nightmares, and the embodiment of Orcish liberty.

This book is the official Player's Guide to the largest and oldest RP-PvP guild on The Venture Co (US) realm, the guild whose name is synonymous with the realm itself, as any Google search will attest. Founded when the realm was a mere 16 days old, the Grin is steeped with years of tradition. This can serve as a source of enduring strength and pride, but may also intimidate new members.

Therefore, the purpose of this book is to help new recruits learn about the Clan, navigate the intimidating process of gaining acceptance and full membership, and assist new members with their roleplaying.

While the Grin is most famous for its strong PvP tradition, it is not a mere PvP guild. The Blacktooth Grin is the single most renowned RP guild on the Venture Co (US) realm, and the fabled iron discipline of its Grunt legions is born from the fusion of roleplaying tradition with player-versus-player combat. This book covers the history and lore of the Clan, the character creation and development process, the application and promotion process, the internal RP factions and military organization of the clan, and more. Everything that a new recruit needs to get a foothold and find a path toward advancement in the Grin can be found herein. The roleplaying resources are illustrative, but not exhaustive, and meant to be used for inspiration, not as a recipe for proper role-play.

So, read on. May you find the encouragement and the inspiration you seek within these pages.

## Chapter One: RP-PvP

It is useless to talk about the Blacktooth Grin without discussing the nature of RP-PvP. There are thousands of PvP guilds all over the world. Many are experts in the arenas, or now in the rated battlegrounds. Many excel at achieving the conditions of victory set forth by the World of Warcraft™ game designers. Similarly, there are thousands of RP guilds steeped in complex and ever-evolving storylines on servers throughout the world.

Many RP guilds excel at PvP. Many PvP guilds also encourage and foster roleplaying communities in their ranks. Some few guilds make commitments to excel at both.

RP-PvP is another game entirely. Imagine riding into Stonard, to turn in a quest, and seeing three dozen soldiers standing in rows and columns, being drilled by their superior commander. Each player character rides a black war wolf, and wears an identical tabard. War cries fill the air and the amassed army rides forth into the swamp. You follow behind them, and as they make their way to the bridge at Deadwind pass, they are confronted with another, larger coalition of alliance soldiers. A battle ensues, and rages for hours as more and more guilds are swept up in the conflict. The bridge and mountain passes are strewn with bones so thick you can barely see the ground.

Now, imagine that this sort of event happened on a nearly daily basis, for weeks or months, and that each battle took place in different areas, representing an ongoing military campaign, with smaller skirmishes and battles on its fringes and borders. Perhaps with the renegade horde clan steadily advancing toward Stormwind, or perhaps being driven back through the Blasted Lands and through the Dark Portal, with the conflict spilling over into Draenor itself. Weeks turn into months. Months turn into years. Expansions come and go. Raiding guilds disappear, new ones form. Purple gear, the fruit of long months of dungeon crawling, is reluctantly sold to vendors or disenchanting. Guilds vanish or transform. Cities sink into the ocean. But in the wilderness, the war rages on.

Armies amassed at either end of the Than'dol Span. Soldiers riding in rank and column over the rolling hills of Arathor. Scouting forces stealing aboard the ships from Theramoore, coming in to savage the ports at Menethil Harbor in order to cover the flank of the main force. This is not your average daily tavern soap opera RP, and it is not your tread-worn game of capture the flag or point defense in the battlegrounds. It is not the daily monotony of Ashran. It is not the arena grind. There is no gear to reward those who wear the colors of the Blacktooth Grin. When all is said and done, only legends and glory remain. This is something that can only be witnessed in an RP-PvP community like that on The Venture Co (US).

RP-PvP provides a backdrop of epic and ongoing conflict to motivate “world PvP” on a massive and continuous scale. Role-play helps the leaders of participating guilds transform a chaotic miasma of overripe egos all bristling to demonstrate their superiority to each other into a unified and disciplined fighting force, who responds to orders, can execute complex tactical and strategic maneuvers, and launch daring surprise attacks on

opponent forces. Role-play also motivates the players to participate, to embed themselves fully into a difficult and stressful military culture, in order to experience a type of full immersion in the game world that can be hard to come by otherwise. Conversely, the dangers of living in contested territory full time on a PvP realm, in close proximity to enemy forces, inspires a quality of roleplaying and storytelling quite unlike any form of entertainment that has ever existed in the history of the world. Faced with the daily struggles of survival, the challenges of securing shelter and safety, of sharing the glories of victory and the hardships of loss can bring guildmates together and form bonds of friendship to last a lifetime.

The intensity can carry the interest of the players long after the last raid boss is beaten, after the last piece of arena gear is equipped, after the endless procession of achievements loses its luster. The intensity can also lead to burnout. Hopelessness and despair have ravaged the ranks of these guilds on more than one occasion, and the frenetic pace of training and constant conflict can tire and exhaust even the most dedicated and skillful player. In these times the stories, and lore, and legends built up over months and years of roleplaying can offer sustenance and a source of rejuvenation for players.

The two perfect each other. Story and Conflict both, coequal and fully integrated, and their fusion leads to something that is greater than the sum of the parts. The stories and wars become legends and myths.

Names become immortal. World of Warcraft™ offers the illusion of heroism to its players, but RP-PvP such as that produced by the guilds on the Venture Co (US) realm offers you a taste of the real thing.

And so, to understand the Blacktooth Grin, you must understand that we are not a “hardcore PvP guild.” We are not a “heavy RP guild.” We are an exemplar of the true RP-PvP guilds, on the foremost RP-PvP realm in the world.

In order to understand us, to join us, and to find a sense of belonging in our ranks, you must know the stories of which your story will be a continuation. You must know the history of the Orcs of Draenor, not as it is told by the historians of Orgrimmar, but as it is told by the Sythegars of the Blacktooth Grin. The story of the Grin begins over thirty years ago, on a world called Draenor...

## Chapter Two: The True History of the Horde

“Have a seat. Over there, the skins by the fire pit, away from the smoke. Good. You and I have much to discuss, young one. The others have no doubt sent you to me for a lesson in history. Don’t look so surprised, you’re hardly the first. Pass me that water skin.”

The ancient Orc furrows his scar-laced brow. Red in the firelight, he stares at you.

“History is not a recital of dates and names, of battles won and lost, grot. It is a litany of choices. Decisions made, and consequences suffered. When you look at history, don’t focus on the events, focus on the choices and motivations that led to those events. Put yourself into the minds of the actors, and the true history becomes clear. I will tell you now the history of our people.”

### *The Destruction of the Orcish Horde*

“Twenty-five years ago, Orgrim Doomhammer assumed control of the greatest military force in the history of the world we now call Azeroth. Back then, Azeroth was only the name of the human kingdom nestled between Stranglethorn and the stony reaches of Khaz Modan. An army unlike any this world has seen in ten thousand years. He would take this army to the gates of the great throne of Lordaeron, capital of the Alliance of the Seven Kingdoms. There, on the doorstep of the human empire, Doomhammer the Betrayer, Warchief of the mighty Orcish Horde, the will of whose soldiers burned with the demonic power of Mannoroth the Flayer, was utterly crushed. His armies broken and cast in chains, his great armada put to the torch, the mighty Orgrim Doomhammer fled for his miserable life, and vanished into the hill country north and east of Tirisfal.”

The gray-bearded Orc pulled a mouth full of stale, foul tasting water from the bladder. He looks at you, letting you absorb the question.

“Why was he defeated, young one? How could it have happened? Why did he flee, leaving his people to be enslaved in internment camps? To know this, you must know how Doomhammer came to lead that army in the first place. Six years before his crushing defeat at the gates of Lordaeron, Orgrim Doomhammer was a captain of the Blackrock Clan, riding over the rubble pile that was once the great and powerful Stormwind.”

“That’s right. The city you call ‘Stormwind’ now is actually ‘New Stormwind’, grot. And don’t you ever forget it. The pride and arrogance of the Humans, and the strength of their propaganda has robbed you of one of your people’s crowning achievements. Blackhand the Destroyer, the First Warchief, who built the Horde and led the charge through the Dark Portal to this strange world, visited the scourge of war on the human capital of the southern kingdom of Azeroth, and thirty years ago he broke the armies of Stormwind, razed their magnificent capital to the ground, and fed their dead to the crows.”

“On that night, the night of his absolute victory, Blackhand the Destroyer, the founder and

father of the Blackrock Clan, was slain in an act of cold-blooded treachery. Attacked when his back was turned by none other than Orgrim Doomhammer, a trusted captain in his raiders, who were called the Sythegore Arm. Blackhand died having brought glory immortal to his ancestors, and to you. But once again, young one. I put to you the question.”

“Why?”

“What drove Doomhammer to this act of treachery? Was it courage? What courage need strike the father of his people when his back is turned? Was it honor? What honor does not demand a duel?”

“No, it was none of these. Orgrim acted out of fear, taking an opportunity he had been waiting for to seize power. It was his hatred and jealousy of Gul’dan, Blackhand’s most trusted and loyal friend and advisor, which led Orgrim to this evil and dishonorable act. Let us talk for a moment about Gul’dan.”

### ***Gul’dan, the Breaker of Dreams***

“The stories you were told about Gul’dan were likely lies, young one. He wasn’t an insane, power hungry monster. He wanted to free his people from slavery.”

“Gul’dan was the apprentice of the high shaman, Ner’zhul, the leader of the Orcs on Draenor. They lived in Nagrand, where the shaman Ner’zhul led the orcish tribes at the spirit mountain Oshu’gun. The mountain was holy to the Orcs, for the spirits of our ancestors congregated there. It was a place of power, and a place of relative peace.”

“But peace has never been kind to the Orcs. While the warrior chieftains and great hunters proved their prowess in hunting the massive Elek and Clefthoof that roamed the grasslands and forests, the shamans tended to the veneration of our ancestor spirits. Or so they thought. It was Gul’dan who first discovered that certain ancestral spirits were vanishing, and when he brought his concerns to his mentor, the Elder Shaman ignored them, so as not to spread panic.”

“Determined to find the reason for the disappearances, Gul’dan began to spend more and more time in the spirit world, deep in trance and communing with the souls of the Orcish leaders from centuries past.”

“It was then that he met a spirit unlike any other. One of indescribable power and calm, whom Gul’dan called ‘The Beautiful One.’”

“It was this spirit, The Beautiful One, who told Gul’dan the truth. The spirit was not one of his ancestors, but had chosen to appear to Gul’dan in this form out of respect for his mortal mind, as the orcish shaman might be terrified and shun his natural form. Oshu’gun was no mountain, but a crashed vessel from another world, and its pilot was alien to Draenor, a type of immortal energy being The Beautiful One called the ‘Naaru.’ This

Naaru had come to Draenor centuries earlier, fleeing an ancient war between its kind and the armies led by The Beautiful One. It had brought with it the strange blue-skinned race which The Beautiful One explained were its subjects and its loyal servants, and to whom it bestowed its powers.”

“It was using Draenor to raise an army of these alien beings, which it would then lead back into the ancient war. Gul’dan knew of this race, which lived secluded in the high mountains of the south, and his people had long known the sting of their demonic magic. Worse still, the nature of the Naaru was such that its very presence on Draenor caused its alien energies to bleed out into, and eventually to burn the spirit realm near Oshu’gun. Helplessly attracted to the raw power of this Naaru, the spirits of the Orcish ancestors had long ago begun to congregate at the crash site.”

“And as the corrupting, alien energies of the Naaru bled into the surrounding landscape, it burned a hole into the dimension of its origin. A spiritual void slowly grew with its center at Oshu’gun, devouring the helpless souls of the nearby orcish ancestors. Generations of orc spirits were consumed by this vortex, while the Naaru hid its presence from the orcish shamans, even going so far as to impersonate the ancestor spirits and encourage the continued burial rites at the foot of its diseased and broken vessel.”

“Under the Naaru, the orc shamans had lived a lie for centuries, in what Gul’dan called ‘the prison of beautiful dreams.’ Gul’dan was horrified. The Beautiful One explained that the Vortex was natural; its purpose was to cleanse the spirit world of the corrupting influence of this outsider, but that the Naaru had been feeding it the souls of the orcish ancestors in its place, slowing and satiating its endless hunger, giving the Naaru time to build its blue-skinned army. Gul’dan could see that the Naaru was a coward, that it dared not face its natural enemies in the war of its people. The Beautiful One had found many of the Orcish spirits on the other side of the Vortex, and had spent years searching for the world of their origin.”

“Sadly, their souls could not be saved or returned to Draenor without risking further damage to the world. The Beautiful One offered to help Gul’dan save his people and his world, to help him drive off the Naaru and its foul minions by moving the spirits away from Oshu’gun, to a place where they would be safe. A sanctuary.”

“If the spirits were removed, the immortal Naaru would itself be drawn through the Vortex, closing it forever and saving the orcs. Gul’dan agreed, and the spirit revealed its true name, ‘Kil’jaeden’, teaching the young shaman how to summon him from across the dimensional veil. In the weeks and months to follow, Kil’jaeden taught Gul’dan how to summon and bind spirits to objects, and Gul’dan began to make preparations for a mass evacuation. If his plan failed, he would alarm the Naaru to his intentions and bring its wrath and the retribution of its servants on his people. No, he would need to take steps to build and train an elite force to help him execute his plan. The Elder Shaman, Ner’zhul would not help him, so he would save the orcs himself.”

“Gul’dan assembled a group of the warriors and shamans he most trusted, and taught them

much of what he'd learned from Kil'jaeden. His background as a necrolyte gave him insights into spiritual magic, and the knowledge from his new ally gave him powers and insights unlike those any mortal had known before."

"One night, by the light of the stars, Gul'dan, his trusted necrolytes, and his elite guard performed a powerful magical rite at the foot of Oshu'gun, which bound all of the souls of the Orcish ancestors into specially crafted blades to be wielded by these frightening warriors, whom Gul'dan called his 'Spirit Blades.' On that night, the Elder Shaman Ner'zhul, and every other shaman in the Orcish clans lost their powers and their connection to our ancestors. Gul'dan and his necrolytes had shattered the prison of beautiful dreams that the Naaru had used to enslave the orcs for centuries."

"The great sacrifice that Gul'dan made that fateful day provided the opportunity to defeat the great leviathan in Oshu'gun. The Naaru was defeated, as the Vortex consumed it and drove it from Draenor. The Naaru's defeat severed the armies of the Draenei from their source of war magic. The drums of battle sounded in the southern mountain passes, and the orcs knew that they must prepare to defend themselves."

"Terror and panic spread through the orcish clans, and the Chieftains called for an immediate conclave. Emboldened by his success in rescuing the souls of their ancestors, Gul'dan and his necrolytes unveiled the second part of their plan. In order to defend themselves against the enraged Chieftains and former shamans, and to aid their warriors in the battles to come, Gul'dan and his shadow council combined the spirit magic and the knowledge of Kil'jaeden into a new type of magic, summoning and binding powerful beings from the ranks of Kil'jaeden's own armies into their service. For the first time, immortals were bent to mortal will."

"Kil'jaeden appeared to Gul'dan in his true form, a terrifying being of war and malice, but Gul'dan was not afraid. Orcs do not fear war, or malice. Kil'jaeden admired Gul'dan for his courage and cunning, for discovering the forbidden secrets of how to bind the immortal soldiers of his Burning Legion. But he could not let the clever orc have this power for free. No, there would be a price for this knowledge. If Gul'dan did not convince the orcs to drink the blood of the pit lord Mannoroth, and bind themselves to the will of Kil'jaeden's burning legion, his horrific armies would slay them all."

"With enemies amassing on all sides, the orcish clans met for their emergency conclave. There, Gul'dan revealed the truth to them. He told them that he had stolen the power they would need to survive, and that in survival lay the hope for true and lasting freedom. But the price of survival was servitude in the short term, until they could find a means to escape. Gul'dan was confident that he could free them eventually as he had done our ancestors."

"Servitude was not what he wanted for his people, but it bought them time, and a means to turn back the Draenei armies in the south and east."

"The clan chieftains were abhorred, shocked, some even terrified. The Frostwolf Clan,

led by Durotan and his blind and now toothless shaman Drek'thar, refused to have any part of it. Durotan forbade his warriors from drinking the blood of Mannoroth, and fled with his clan to the mountains of the far north.”

“To hide, like rabbits before the wolves they professed to be. There in the mountains, they attracted followers among the smaller, weaker orcish clans such as the Whiteclaw, the Bloodmane, and the Redwalker Clans, who chose the path of cowardice rather than uniting under a single Horde, as Gul'dan proposed.”

“One of the warriors of the Blackrock Clan, Orgrim Doomhammer, had befriended Durotan in his youth and nursed a quiet grudge against Gul'dan for upsetting the old ways. Orgrim was confident that the clan Chieftains would never submit to Gul'dan's plan, never drink the demonic blood and gave loud voice to this confidence. That confidence was shattered and Orgrim humiliated when Grommash Hellscream, the leader of the Warsong Clan, bravely stepped forward to do what he knew must be done to save the orcs.”

“When commanded to do so by Blackhand, Orgrim reluctantly drank the blood of Mannoroth, and never forgave Gul'dan, Blackhand, or Hellscream for making the hard choice to accept a life of servitude in hopes of someday freeing themselves.”

“The war was over swiftly. The orcs, united and led by Gul'dan and his warrior chieftain Blackhand, crushed the Draenei invaders, and burned their corpses to rid them of the spiritual fire that had caused the vortex at Oshu'gun. Then they drove the survivors to the far corners of the world. Treachery followed shortly thereafter, as the Frostwolves, Bloodmane, Whiteclaw and Redwalker clans began to launch assaults on their orcish brethren, hoping to catch them weakened from the battle of Shattrath. The Whiteclaw were all but exterminated in these pathetic skirmishes, and the Frostwolves driven ever deeper into hiding.”

“Then, as the dust settled in the aftermath, with the rage of Mannoroth still fresh in their veins, the orcish armies began to tear themselves apart. Reprieve came when Gul'dan was contacted through the nether by the sorcerer Medivh. Medivh offered an artifact of power that he might use to free his people in return for their aid in a war.”

“Gul'dan agreed.”

“Gul'dan built the portal, and left his former mentor Ner'zhul behind to guard it with his Shadowmoon Clan, as a humiliating punishment for his past treachery. Grom Hellscream and the Warsong Clan were also asked to stay behind, out of caution. Gul'dan knew that the Warsong would never yield to the authority of Blackhand or himself, and he could not trust at this critical juncture. Other clans, including the Bladefist, the Thunderlord, the Laughing Skull and the Bonechewer, and many smaller clans such as the Lightning Blade, were left to guard the homeland and make sure that it wasn't overrun by what was left of the fiendish Ogres, with the understanding that they would be called as reserves if the war proved too difficult.”

“As you know, the rest is legend.”

### *The Second Warchief*

“In the first war against the humans, Orgrim learned to fear Gul’dan the way a rat fears the owl. Gul’dan was more clever by far than any other orc alive, and determined to find any power necessary to free the orcs. That power terrified Orgrim, and eventually led him betray and kill Blackhand, the most gifted tactical mastermind the Orcs ever produced, so as to isolate Gul’dan and bend the first warlock to his will. Orgrim, resentful at having been pressed into the service of the legion, pressed Gul’dan into his own service.”

“He did not stop there. Doomhammer slew the first Warlock’s trusted lieutenants, the former shamans of our people who had been freed by Gul’dan from the beautiful prison of dreams the Naaru had woven to mislead and enslave our kind for millennia. He slew the few to whom Gul’dan the Destroyer of Dreams had entrusted the methods of binding the beings of the Nether, of bending them to mortal will, the small handful who had the power to lead our people to lasting freedom and to release us from the yoke of Mannoroth.”

“When Gul’dan awoke from his torpor, Doomhammer had him bound and surrounded by guards. He gave the first Warlock an ultimatum. Serve the Traitor, or be slain. Gul’dan did what he knew was right, and bought time--time to pursue the powers promised him, to free our people--and so he submitted to Doomhammer. With Gul’dan’s knowledge of the armies, Orgrim spent the next several years systematically hunting down and killing the most loyal and able commanders, lieutenants, and soldiers in Blackhand’s Horde. He caused an outrage when he refused to bring the great Warsong Clan and their heroic leader Grom Hellscream to the war effort, and instead summoned from exile the traitorous and weak Frostwolf Clan and their allies in the Bloodmane and Redwalker clans. For years, Doomhammer maneuvered these traitors into positions of command in the armies. He even enlisted assassins from among their ranks to hunt down and kill the sons of the slain Warchief, Rend and Maim Blackhand.”

The scar-faced old shaman placed a slab of dried peat on the fire, whispering to it for a moment until it erupted in bright flame.

“He failed, of course. In all his life, Orgrim Doomhammer never succeeded at any task he set his mind to, save that lone act of treachery.”

Rend and Maim Blackhand, gifted in turn with the leadership skills and raw cunning of their father, withdrew to Stonard in the Black Morass, where they had been tasked to guard the Dark Portal, our only way home to Draenor. In the years following their father’s death, they lived in exile, abandoned and hunted like dogs for sport, until they were contacted by Zuluhed the Whacked, leader of the Dragonmaw Clan, who’d spent the years after Stormwind’s destruction bending the fearsome immortal dragonflights into the service of the mighty Orcish Horde. Zuluhed had been fiercely loyal to their father, and he committed himself and his clan to restoring them to a place of honor and power, and in the following two years, Rend and Maim were able to rally the loyal survivors of

Blackhand's legions to their own banner, to carve out the fortresses of Rockard and Stonard, and Kyross, of Render's Valley and Thorium Point, and Kargath. They founded their own Clan, to stand against Doomhammer the Traitor, and to return the Horde to its rightful rule."

"Thus did Rend and Maim Blackhand, exiled sons of the slain Warchief, found the Blacktooth Grin Clan."

Anger sweeps across the shaman's face, and the firelight dims to a deep and nearly lightless scarlet. His eye sockets are cast in sudden shadow, as his voice deepens and hardens.

"But fate would rob them of their vengeance. Orgrim had decapitated the Horde, throwing its armies and navies into disarray, and in the sixth summer after the first war, reports began to swirl that in the far north, across the Than'dol Span, the human kingdom of Stromgarde, seat of the fallen empire of Arathor, was levying its golden armies and marching to attack the Dragonmaw clan in eastern Khaz Modan, carving the Horde in two. Worse, the Alliance of the seven kingdoms of Lordaeron had roused Magni Bronzebeard, the Mountain King of Khaz Modan, the Thane of Ironforge, Lord of the Dwarven Legions, and already his titan-forged infantry descended the mountain passes, making their way toward the Orcish capital at Blackrock Mountain. There simply was no time to rid the Horde of its traitor. Doomhammer called for a truce with the Blacktooth Grin and asked them to aid him in driving back the dwarven enemy, in saving the Dragonmaw and Bleeding Hollow clans."

The shaman sighs.

"Which, of course, we did. We burned the dwarven outposts and drove their legions, inch by bloody inch, back up the mountain passes, back to the very gates of Ironforge, and we held them there, while Doomhammer led the other clans north, and Gul'dan led the naval armada from the west."

"Try as he might, however, Doomhammer and his Frostwolf commanders could not press their armies into the lands of Arathor. The forces of Stromgarde held him there, while Gul'dan and the Navy savaged the coastal cities behind them, burning ports and cutting off the Alliance of Lordaeron from our flanks."

"Doomhammer once again sent for the Blacktooth Grin. Rend and Maim left a holding force in Khaz Modan, and moved the bulk of their infantry to the Than'dol Span, where they relieved Doomhammer's main force."

"Then, the fool, instead of using his concentrated might to crush Stromgarde and advance north, refusing to fight side by side with the Orcs whose father he had betrayed and slain in an act of cowardice, Orgrim Doomhammer left the Grin behind to hold the Than'dol Span, abandoned his own supplies, and ordered his armies to swim across the span of waters, where they traveled up the coast, pillaging from undefended farmsteads. He proved his

disloyalty to the Orcish Horde by bribing a corrupt and weak human noble from Alterac named Lord Perenolde, to secure passage through the treacherous Alterac Mountains. Doomhammer left half of the Frostwolves, without provisions, led by the ever-timid Durotan, and his gutless, blind shaman Drek'thar, now powerless on an alien world, to guard his flank. Then Doomhammer the Traitor, in an act of insanity only a fool's mind could comprehend, moved the bulk of his forces deep, deep into enemy territory, to the borderlands of Quel'Thelas, where he pillaged elven outposts for provisions and supplies before swinging back south to the shores north of Lordaeron. There, on the coast of Northern Tirisfal, he had commanded Gul'dan to meet him with the Twilight's Hammer and Stormreaver Clans."

"Gul'dan watched the beleaguered armies of Doomhammer march out of the forests and set up their signal pyres, from several hundred yards off the coast. He listened as the Traitor Chief blew the signal horns, and beat on the drums of war, summoning him and broadcasting his position to the Lordaeron commanders. Gul'dan reached out with his mind, and saw the awful trap closing in on the foolish and proud Doomhammer. Stromgarde had guessed his plan, and swung their forces around to Alterac Valley. The starving Frostwolves had predictably failed to hold the mountain passes, and had retreated, leaving Orgrim's forces utterly surrounded. Gul'dan did then, what he knew must be done. The Breaker of Dreams commanded his Stormreavers and Twilight's Hammer forces to leave Doomhammer to his all but certain fate, and to escort him, over the waters, to the tomb of Sargeras. Gul'dan would recover the artifact needed to crush the forces of Lordaeron, and free the Horde from their servitude to the Legion. It was their only hope of survival."

"But Gul'dan learned too late that Sargeras himself had been the one to corrupt the mad sorcerer Medivh, and that the tomb was nothing but a trap. Gul'dan, who spent his life freeing the Orcs from the prison of dreams woven by the Naaru at Oshu'gun, died trying to save his people from the corruption and slavery of the Burning Legion. His final commands to his captains were to rush to Orgrim's aid, and to try to rescue the Orcs from the wrath of Lordaeron."

"They did as commanded. But as they landed on the beaches of Tirisfal, Orgrim the Betrayer, in his blind rage, commanded his archers to slay the entire force and burn their vessels as they struggled through the crashing tides. A small handful of the vessels escaped, with skeleton crews led by Cho'gall, and sailed out into oblivion in a desperate bid to survive the coming tragedy. The following morning, Doomhammer's ragged armies, surrounded on every side, cut off from all supplies and means of escape, were butchered, and the survivors enslaved."

The ancient orc takes another long draw from the foul-smelling water skin, wiping his mouth with the back of his cloth-wrapped gauntlets.

"So, you see, grot. Once you know how Doomhammer rose to the head of the armies, once you understand why he led them there, to that place on that night, you realize that the complete destruction of the Horde was the only possible outcome. He destroyed it. The

story of Doomhammer does not end there, though it ought to have. No, the head of the snake, you will learn, has venom even when the body has been severed.”

### ***The Fall of Rend and Maim Blackhand***

“The vast and mighty Orcish Horde was broken. It was a small matter then, for Stromgarde and Alterac to return to the south and rout the forces of Rend and Maim at the Than’dol Span. The Blacktooth Grin staged a fighting withdrawal, all the way back through Khaz Modan, to the Blackrock Mountain. The enraged humans flooded back into the southern lands, butchering and isolating the remains of the Blackrock Clan, who submitted to the will of Rend.”

“The humans, led by Khadgar, swarmed the swamplands of the Black Morass. They set Stonard, Rockard, and Kyross to the torch, driving the hardy survivors into the mountains and hills, and then Khadgar led the human mages in the attempted destruction of the Dark Portal, trapping Rend and Maim, and the survivors in Azeroth. But Khadgar could not comprehend the intricacies of Gul’dan and Medivh’s creation. His careless and destructive magic caused a the powerful blast which unleashed a wave of destructive power so vast and untamed that it burned the very land itself, destroying forever the primal beauty of the Black Morass, and instantly killing all of the nearby life, tainting the whole of it with unchecked energies from the Twisting Nether, where it pools and writhes to this day. Khadgar built Nethergarde Keep atop the ruins of Kyross, to guard the rift between worlds that he had failed to close.”

“It was not long after this that the Dark Iron Dwarves rose from their slumber and began to pour out of the labyrinthine citadel at the heart of Blackrock Mountain. Maim was slain in the defense of his people.”

“At the eleventh hour, Rend Blackhand, betrayed and alone, marooned on an alien world, secured the survival of his people by kneeling in servitude to the Black Dragonflight.”

### ***The Internment***

“In the decade to follow, the broken remains of the orcish Horde lived as slaves in internment camps. A generation of orcish children were raised in servitude and squalor, indifferent to and ignorant of their proud heritage. They were forced to mine thorium and mithril for the greed-addled dwarves and human lords, and they were forced to participate in humiliating and violent gladiatorial spectacles, often being fed to the wild beasts of this strange world to the applause of the gathered crowds.”

“If children in the camps were disobedient, it was a common practice to hang their parents in front of crow cages over raging fires, and torture or flay the child in front of the caged parent, then release them both before their wounds became terminal, breaking their will and fostering obedience through terror. The orcs, even when compelled by the twisted will of the Burning Legion, had slain the Draenei invaders on Draenor with clean and swift deaths, not slow torture and degradation. These humans were capable of evils the orcs

had no words to describe.”

### ***Hellscream and the Warsong Clan***

“Still there was hope. As most orcs were captured and placed into camps, survivors of the Bleeding Hollow Clan led by Kilrogg Deadeye managed to survive in the mountain passes east of Khaz Modan. Chieftain Deadeye came from a long line of oracles, able to envision the moment of their demise. He knew where he was needed as his final days were drawing near. He devised a plan to bypass the mages at Nethergarde, and to slip back through the dimensional rift to Draenor. There, Deadeye told an astonished Grom Hellscream what had become of his people. Ner’zhul, desperate to reclaim his rule over the orcish clans, reopened the Dark Portal and sent Hellscream and the Warsong Clan through on raids to recover four magical artifacts (including, distastefully, the Skull of Gul’dan), and to try to destroy Nethergarde Keep. Grom, sensing the power madness of Ner’zhul, did these things, but in the end abandoned Ner’zhul to his madness, leading his Clan through the Dark Portal even as Ner’zhul was tearing Draenor apart.”

“Trapped on this world, with the folly of Ner’zhul and the destruction of his home behind him, Hellscream led the bulk of his Warsong Clan, stirring them into a blood-mad frenzy and swearing to free the Orcs from the shackles of this strange world.”

“In every human kingdom, whispers of a ferocious uprising began to stir. The orcs, it was said, had returned through the dimensional rift and butchered the forces of Nethergarde. Indeed, they had swept up through the east like a plague of locusts, burning and crushing every outpost between Lakeshire and the Than’dol Valley.”

“Somewhere, in the fog of all this disorder, an unknown orcish gladiatorial slave, who had been raised since birth by the humans and known to them only as “Thrall”, managed to escape his captors and flee into the wilderness. It was here that Hellscream and Warsong Clan found him. Starving, with no knowledge whatsoever of his heritage, barely even full grown, and speaking not one word of the Orcish tongue, they took him in, and attempted to teach him what it meant to be a free orc.”

### ***The Rise of Thrall***

“In the beginning, Thrall showed merit as a fighter, and assisted the Warsong Clan on their raids. Hellscream learned that the Frostwolves had managed to avoid the Internment by fleeing (as they are wont to do) into the mountains.”

“He sought them out, and brought Thrall, whom he’d adopted as his ‘little brother,’ to meet the shaman Drek’tar. Drek’tar paid little attention to Thrall in their meeting, so Thrall left to go mingle with the other soldiers by the campfires. There he boasted of his combat prowess and belched noble-sounding words about liberating the camps, which he’d likely picked up from Hellscream. One of the orcs there, who had been sitting quietly away from the others, mocked and ridiculed the idealistic young orc from beneath a cowl. Thrall grew outraged and demanded that the orc identify himself and submit to an honor

duel.”

“This orc shocked all in attendance when he pulled back the cowl and revealed himself to be none other than Orgrim Doomhammer. He’d crept into the camp after tracking the Warsong Clan through the nearby foothills. Thrall, knowing nothing of this Doomhammer, demanded an honor dual, and Doomhammer agreed to it. This led to an historic moment, Thrall defeated the disgraced former warchief and accomplished his first and only service to the Orcish Horde.”

“Doomhammer pathetically begged Thrall to kill him, and end his shame, but Thrall, knowing nothing of orcish honor, did not.”

“Only after this duel did Drek’tar take notice of young Thrall. He even concocted a story about how Thrall was the long lost son of Durotan. The legend spread like wildfire among the foothills, and orcish survivors began to trickle out of their hiding. Hellscream was perplexed as Drek’tar took the promising young warrior and turned him into a symbol of the “New Horde”, parading him around like a long lost hero when it was Hellscream and the Warsong Clan who fought to free the Orcs.”

“It wasn’t long after that when Doomhammer was killed while fleeing from battle in one of the most notorious mining camps in the Arathi Highlands. To this day that camp is honored with the name of Hammerfall.”

“The rest of the history is well known. The Warsong Clan freed the orcs from internment and took them over the ocean to Kalimdor. Thrall claimed credit and set these noble warriors to the humiliating task of city building, naming Durotar after the coward chieftain of the Frostwolves, and Orgrimmar after the Betrayer who slew the true Warchief. Thrall’s city building woke the sleeping demigod of the night elves, and Grom once again made a sacrifice in order to save his people, drinking the blood of Mannoroth so that he might vanquish the raging forest god Cenarius.”

“Grom Hellscream died with his blade buried to the hilt in Mannoroth’s chest, freeing all orcs everywhere from the tyranny of the Legion. But it was Thrall, the puppet Warchief of Drek’tar, who had nothing to do with the fight, paraded around the Pit Lord’s armor in front of his hut in the Valley of Wisdom, as atrophy to his ego. Back in what had been the Black Morass, orcs who were loyal to the True Horde still struggled for daily survival. Meanwhile, in Orgrimmar, Thrall surrounded himself with creature comforts and made peace with the humans who had tortured and maimed an entire generation of his people.”

## **Chapter Three: Return of the Blacktooth Grin**

*“In the end, all we have is stories . . . The Grin made legends.” -- Kasoon*

The Blacktooth Grin is a Horde Heavy-RP/PvP guild based on the RP-PvP realm The Venture Co (US).

They claim and reside in Stonard, in the Swamp of Sorrows, and can be found raiding various Alliance towns wherever the cry “FEAR THE GRIN!!!” or “THOK MOG THOK!!!” is heard.

The Grin was founded when the realm was just shy of two weeks old, on 22 July, 2006, by Chieftain Gorfrunch Smashblade. They are dedicated to heavy RP and world PvP raids.

This chapter provides a brief outline of the in-game history of the Blacktooth Grin guild on VeCo. Nearly everything in this chapter is a matter of public record, in places such as wowpedia.com, and various forum archives. As such, many of the details from those RP storylines are left to the reader to uncover.

### ***Origins of the Smashblade***

Gorfrunch Smashblade, often called “Smashblade” by his followers, was a decorated grunt in the third war that found himself disaffected and betrayed by Thrall’s city building regime. Reduced to the role of a building foreman after the war, Gorfrunch grew to resent and distrust his new leader for pursuing peace with the humans. Recognizing cities as anathema to Orcish culture, sewers of corruption and vice, from which scribes and laws and comfort and royalty and slavery emerge, Gorfrunch set the building he was assigned to construct on fire and left Orgrimmar for good. He traveled to the remains of the Black Morass and gathered together survivors of the second war who had refused to follow Rend Blackhand to his self-imprisonment. Gorfrunch once again raised the banner of the Blacktooth Grin, and began a half-decade long reign of terror against the Alliance.

As the Chieftain of the resurgent Blacktooth Grin, Gorfrunch Smashblade is famous for his opposition to Thrall, and his saying “Warchiefs make war. Peacechiefs make peace. Whichun’s sitting in Orgreemar?”, and has led his clan in open defiance of Thrall the “Peace Chief”, earning himself and his followers a reputation as war criminals and outlaws at times, although this has changed with the rise of Hellscream the Younger.

### ***Battle for the Keep***

One of the earliest mass engagements in defiance of the Peace Chief, Gorfrunch led the Grin and a coalition of Horde rebels including Grunts and Suncrown on a massive assault on the ruins of Stromgarde Keep. Strom, the seat of the ancient empire of Arathor, was one of the forces that oversaw the Internment of the orcish clans after the second war, and had argued for the mass murder of those interned. Word reached the Smashblade that the armies of fallen Arathor had begun to rebuild their ruined city under the leadership of

Prince Galen Trollbane, and that his militant wing, the Keepers of Stromgarde. The Keepers of Stromgarde had begun to scour the hills of old Arathor and purge the nearby horde outposts.

The Blacktooth Grin retaliated with a force larger than had been seen since the orcs escaped from internment. The battle was decisive, as the Horde forces drove the assembled Keepers and other alliance guilds out of the ruined keep and slaughtered many of its remaining inhabitants. Thus began a rivalry between the Keepers of Stromgarde and the Blacktooth Grin that lives on to this day.

The battle did not end with the defeat of the Keepers of Stromgarde. Instead the Blacktooth Grin used the opportunity to march across an unguarded Than'dol Span and march to the gates of Ironforge itself. The rampaging horde forces proceeded to burn the countryside of Northern Khaz Modan. Upon reaching Ironforge the Blacktooth Grin and its allies waged war upon the gates and could not be repelled for many long hours. This was the first true blood drawn upon a major city of the Alliance. However, this would not be the last of the Grin's exploits.

### ***Killed: Jaina Proudmoore, 25 March 2007***

The Blacktooth Grin had been living in exile within the marshes of Dustwallow. The Peace Chief of the Horde labeled the Blacktooth Grin pariahs and actively worked with the mage Jaina Proudmoore to attempt to eradicate the Blacktooth Grin. Having defeated the many Alliance troops who sought to purge the Grin from their chosen home, a plan was devised by the Blacktooth Grin to defeat this retched truce.

In order to drive a deeper wedge between renegade horde forces and the Peace Chief in Orgrimmar, the Blacktooth Grin led a taskforce supported by members of the Shadow Syndicate, Peace Makers, and Suncrown, where they stormed Lady Proudmoore's tower in Theramore. Being the daughter of the Admiral of the Alliance Fleet during the Second War, Gorfrunch relished the opportunity to raise his axe against her. The Blacktooth Grin forces secured the tower as an elite squadron slew her before significant Alliance reinforcements could arrive.

Though she would be resurrected by Alliance priests, Gorfrunch Smashblade heralded her defeat as a victory for the true Horde. In his announcement, Smashblade noted "For good measure, the rest of the town was torched, and its occupants slaughtered. We offer our condolences to Thrall." After this, the Blacktooth Grin were branded as War Criminals, in violation of various treaties, and forbidden to walk the streets of Orgrimmar for fear of execution. But in the countryside, and the frontier wilderness, they were hailed as heroes. This was the first time a group of Horde had defeated Jaina Proudmoore within her tower.

### ***Battle of Wetlands, 7 May 2007***

Recognizing that the human forces of Stromgarde had begun to reassemble in their ruined

city, the Blacktooth Grin moved to reclaim and hold the Keep after a well-coordinated series of assaults on Southshore, Refuge Pointe, and Thelsamar. After a few initial skirmishes, the full weight of the Keepers and their reserve forces from the Alliance was brought to bear against the invading Grin.

However, life as renegades had taught the Grin how to defeat enemies using guile and deceit. The Alliance's multiple attempts to recapture the land the Grin had conquered resulted in encirclements and slaughter, as a flanking force led by Breadalbane and Eddard caught the main force from behind and crushed them in a pincer, inflicting heavy casualties. The main Alliance force scattered and reassembled in the Wetlands, south of the Than'dol Span, where they were further reinforced by the soldiers of the Knights of Justice. There, in the Wetlands, a major battle ensued which lasted for the better part of a day. Both armies withdrew in a stalemate over the Than'dol Span, each with significant losses.

### ***Invasion of Darnassus, 19 May 2007***

Not satisfied with pillaging the east, the Far Seer Grimnir devised a cunning strategy to gain favor with the Warsong Clan in Ashenvale. Grimnir led the Grin in assembling a coalition army, which included forces from Thunderlord Clan, Suncrown, Dauntless, and Bloodreavers. Grimnir planned to go behind the Kal'dorei defenses in the forests of Ashenvale and Darkshore to lead a vicious attack of Darnassus, the capital of the Kal'dorei.

Using his powers over the elements, Grimnir turned this coalition army into an amphibious force which bypassed the Kal'Dorei defenses by travelling under the sea. As the army approached Auberdine, the Grin's elite rogue squadron carved a path for the army to board a boat without raising the capital's alarms.

A group of ten of the Grin's most ferocious soldiers, led by Gorfrunch, secured the port village of Rut'theran, and from there the main force launched a ferocious assault on Tyrande Whisperwind, leader of the Kal'Dorei. The Blacktooth Grin brought down its full might and swiftly defeated the Priestess of Elune. However, having obtained information from a captured Night Elf, Grimnir knew the Kal'Dorei had a power structure capable of surviving the loss of one of its leaders. Grimnir led the advance force in carving a path to the Cenarian Circle, which allowed the Grin's coalition army to bring down the Arch Druid Fandral Staghelm. Their defeats created ripple effects across the world of Azeroth as the Alliance learned for the first time that their leaders were vulnerable to defeat and the leaders of the Peace Chief's Horde began fearing reprisal.

### ***Shadows over Khaz Modan, Autumn 2007***

The Blacktooth Grin made history when they declared war against Ironforge and launched

a several month long campaign on the kingdom of Khaz Modan. The campaign in Khaz Modan was an extremely ambitious and now famous war effort ever launched by the Blacktooth Grin. The campaign was launched under the direct command of Gorfrunch Smashblade and his Warlord Faquarl Swiftpride and cemented the Grin's place as the most dangerous clan on Azeroth.

Following a large expansion within the Blacktooth Grin's ranks, the Warchief assembled his Sythegar Arm to discuss the creation of formally establishing territory for the Blacktooth Grin. The Grin assessed potential lands to embark on and chose to invade the dwarven kingdom of Khaz Modan. The plan was made to surround the kingdom from the north and the south and push the dwarven defenders into the capital of Ironforge. For months, the war engulfed the whole of the eastern kingdoms.

From Revantusk they launched the war with a brutal assault on the Wildhammer stronghold of Aerie Peak. His first battle was targeted at the Midnight Reveries, an established military who called Aerie Peak their home. The southern deployment of the Grin proceeded to scour the whole of the East, quickly gaining dominance over the Blasted Lands, Searing Gorge, and the Badlands and began to actively patrol these lands from Alliance incursions. With these lands flying the black banner of the Grin, further efforts were made to cut off aid to Ironforge from the humans by taking out its northern reinforcements at the port city Menethil Harbor. The battle for Menethil would be known as the deadliest battle in the campaign as the Grin were forced to attack the city multiple nights following swift reinforcements by the Midnight Reveries, who began to chew at their flank and reinforce the Dwarves, pressing their northern lines.

The war led to the occupation and razing of Kharanos, and finally both fronts of the Grin's campaign met to push into the dwarven heartland of Dun Morogh. The final stages of the campaign culminated in a massive three day long assault on Ironforge that drew the support and opposition of many of the largest guilds in the Horde and Alliance. The first night of the Grin's attack lasted until the sun began to peak above the mountains. The Grin laid siege against the gates of Ironforge and littered the ground in front of the great statue of Modimus Anvilmar with blood and bone. The second night flanked the Alliance's defenses as the Blacktooth Grin's elite rogue squadron smuggled a warlock into the great gnomish tram. The warlock summoned an elite strike force of the Grin who quickly assaulted the gnomish High Tinker Mekkatorque. Mekkatorque's defeat was the first time in history that Ironforge had been penetrated and leader defeated.

By the last night of the siege, the Grin had already forever made their mark on the entire continent of the Eastern Kingdoms. However, the final assault on Bronzebeard was thwarted by Magni and his guards, due to either the incompetence or treachery of several Forsaken members of the strike team that had infiltrated the dwarven citadel. Their position betrayed before they could mount their full assault, the Grin forces were crushed by Magni and his guards, and the dwarves broke the siege to unleash their full wrath on the armies gathered at their gates.

The Warchief Gorfrunch and many of his most loyal guard stood their ground outside of

Ironforge while the Alliance and the Dwarven legions surrounded them. They were butchered, and when the scattered remnants of the Grin regrouped at Taugrek's Stand, there was no Warchief to greet them. A group of rogues was sent to Ironforge to try to reclaim his body, but it was never found.

Broken, the Blacktooth Grin disbanded.

### ***The Fall of Legends, February 2008***

While the Shadows over Khaz Modan campaign made history as the first of its kind, it paled in comparison to the Blacktooth Grin's second campaign which brought war for the first time to Outland. Outland created exponentially more complications with the addition of flight and the inclusions of multiple guilds. This campaign marked the foundation of the Dread Horde and was the single largest coordinated rp-pvp event ever created.

In the aftermath of the Khaz Modan campaign, many of the former Grin who are still loyal to the memory of Gorfrunch band together as The Shattered Guard and tried to preserve the gains they had made during the war effort. They are eventually reunited under Warlord Faquarl, the old Tauren druid who was weary from a decade of constant warfare, and who sought peace for the Grin in their new kingdom. Faquarl led the Grin away from Taugrek's Stand to a more defensible position within Stagalbog Cave in the Swamp of Sorrows.

However, rumors emerged that Gorfrunch has been found in the Caverns of Time, having found a way to live in the past. Gorfrunch had taken the time to heal and returned to the Grin as they were beginning to face a massive assault from the Keepers of Stromgarde. The Keepers who attacked bore the colors of Danath Trollbane, a veteran of the Second War whom Gorfrunch knew personally. Scouts were sent to investigate a newly opened dark portal and discovered many of the Sons of Lothar had survived the sundering of Draenor. Gorfrunch was overcome by his blood rage as he relished the opportunity to bring finality to a war, which for him never ended. Faquarl's hand was forced, as he reassembled the Blacktooth Grin and launched a bloody new campaign beyond the Dark Portal.

The initial assault on Hellfire required that the Blacktooth Grin seek out allies within the Horde. The Peace Chief had assembled a large garrison, which he vainly named after himself. The Grin sought out Suncrown, an all blood elven guild, who had proven useful in the battles against Jaina and Darnassus. Suncrown provided Grin access to Falcon Watch as a base of operations. The Grin also sought out the Thunderlord Clan, promising to reclaim Thunderlord Stronghold for them. To defend against this new threat the Keepers of Stromgarde assembled a large coalition army to combat the Grin and protect their leader Danath Trollbane. The guilds in opposition to the Grin were the reviled Midnight Reveries and the elite Much Too Much.

The war began in thunderous assaults. The Grin invaded Honor Hold in an attempt to kill Trollbane and demoralize the Keeper's coalition. The first assault however was halted by

Marshal Isildor. Though Gorfrunch personally slew the Marshal, his sacrifice allowed the Alliance to regroup around Danath and push the Grin back to Falcon Watch. The Alliance retaliated, destroying Falcon Watch and forcing the Grin to invade Thrallmar to regroup. The guards of Thrallmar had no time to combat the Grin forces as the Alliance soon attacked Thrallmar in an attempt to end the Blacktooth Grin's campaign before it could start. However, the Grin were prepared for the assault and drew the Alliance into General Nazgrel's keep. With Thrallmar in immediate danger, Nazgrel assisted the Grin in defeating the army of the Alliance.

Knowing that the Alliance's retreat presented an opportunity to kill Danath Trollbane, Gorfrunch rallied his forces. The Grin's scouts found the retreating Alliance rallying near Hellfire Citadel and Gorfrunch ordered that they be scattered. Once done, the collation army of the Grin rushed into Honor Hold and attacked a defenseless Trollbane. The Alliance could not rally their forces in time to defend their military leader. The Grin brought down their first Son of Lothar and demoralized the Alliance marking a significant escalation of the conflict.

After asserting dominance in the Hellfire Peninsula, the Blacktooth Grin began to move deeper into the shattered lands of Draenor. Warlord Faquarl soon discovered an ancient artifact within the crumbling Halls of Auchindoun. This artifact, known as the Sliver of Orodur, became central to the emerging conflict between the Dread Horde and the Alliance. The Sliver of Orodur contained the essence of an ancient Pit Lord who sought to control the possessor. Khadgar sought the Alliance's assistance in reclaiming this relic and destroying it. Warlord Faquarl used the artifact in many battles against the Alliance.

The three largest battles following the discovery of the Sliver of Orodur were in Terrokar Forest and Zangarmarsh. The Grin sieged Allerian Stronghold in an attempt to gain dominance in Terrokar Forest. The Alliance managed to hold back the Dread Horde and the Stronghold withstood the Grin's assault. As the Grin moved north into Zangarmarsh, the artifact's energies began to warp the battles that began to unfold. The Grin made camp in Zabra'jin, and the staff altered the strength of the troll guards, making them several times more powerful than even the guards of Stormwind Keep. The Alliance knew they had to retrieve the artifact for Khadgar and attacked Zabra'jin. The attack was costly, but the armies of Much Too Much were able to steal the artifact and contain it within the mushroom city of Telredor.

The Dread Horde launched their largest assault of the campaign to retrieve the Sliver of Orodur. The artifact increased the powers of the soldiers of Telredor and many horde and alliance began to suffer immense losses. As the Blacktooth Grin began to lose ground, the Sliver of Orodur cast a blinding light across Zangarmarsh, healing the wounded on both sides. With the artifact in hand, the Dread Horde retreated into the Blade's Edge Mountains.

The Blacktooth Grin were moving north despite the desires of Warchief Gorfrunch Smashblade. His only desire was defeating the Sons of Lothar and declaring victory for the Dread Horde. He allowed Faquarl to lead the Grin north to repay Suncrown for their

services. A general of Suncrown was conscripted to fight for Kael'thas Sunstrider in Tempest Keep. Suncrown agreed to assist the Blacktooth Grin in Outland on the stipulation that the Grin would assist them in rescuing their general. This side mission did not hold Gorfrunch's interest and instead he went to Garadar to make contact with the fabled Mag'har. Upon his arrival, the Warchief was captured and sent to Shattrath, where he would await trial for his war crimes. Khadgar volunteered to prosecute the Warchief and A'dal would sit as judge.

Meanwhile in Blade's Edge Mountains, the demonic corruption seeping from the artifact began to have an adverse effect on Warlord Faquarl. Using the newly reclaimed Thunderlord Stronghold, Faquarl led the Dread Horde against the Alliance armies in Sylvanaar and Toshley's Station. The battles were especially fierce over the land bridge between Thunderlord Stronghold and Sylvanaar. Both Dread Horde and Alliance soldiers were sent plummeting to their demise over the sides of the bridge. As battle began to wear on, victories for the Grin became less and less decisive. Both Much too Much and The Grim Covenant began contributing larger armies to each battle to bolster the thinning Midnight Reveries and Keepers of Stromgarde forces. Though Faquarl was weakening from the effects of the artifact, he had managed to secure a path to Netherstorm, when a missive arrived from Shattrath. Finally hearing of the Warchief's imprisonment, the Grin prepared to siege Shattrath. Agholin, leader of Suncrown, instead offered to serve as the Warchief's attorney at trial.

The trial was swift. Khadgar quickly advocated for the execution of the Warchief outlining all of the havoc and lives lost due to Gorfrunch's Blacktooth Grin. Yet the powerful A'dal insisted on hearing the orc's defense for his actions. Agholin arrived and defended Gorfrunch's right to return to his homeland. She pointed out that the Alliance had been harrying the Grin across a world that was alien to their own, but to Gorfrunch it was home. A'dal weighed both sides and found the Warchief guilty. The Warchief would be allowed to assist Suncrown in their fight against Kael'thas and immediately after be transferred to the front lines on the assault against the Black Temple. A'dal's solution was to use the Warchief's skill in warfare to defeat the foes of the Naaru.

The Alliance was enraged at this sentence, knowing the Warchief would never honor such an arrangement. Khadgar asked his coalition army to disregard A'dal's ruling and attack the Grin at Tempest Keep, to end their campaign once and for all.

Warlord Faquarl led the Dread Horde to the Tempest Keep, where the Warchief and Agholinn were waiting for them. The Dread Horde quickly secured the perimeter of the flying fortress, when the Alliance ambushed them from above. The Dread Horde valiantly fought on the platform of the ship, waiting for the forces of Suncrown to return with their general. The Alliance proved too strong and upon the emergence of Suncrown, the Dread Horde fled to the Bio-domes. It was within the bio-domes that the Grin lost their Warlord.

The Grin quickly set up defensive positions within the bio-dome, with both Faquarl and Gorfrunch knowing that this very well may be the last stand of the Blacktooth Grin. The

battle went on for hours until A'dal himself intervened. A portal was made for the Dread Horde to return to Shadowmoon Valley and begin their service to the Naaru. The Warchief sounded the retreat. Warlord Faquarl and his elite squadron known as the Bhurkas held the line as the Dread Horde retreated. In the last moments, Faquarl was shot down by multiple poisoned arrows. The alliance was able to reclaim the Sliver of Orodur thus leading the largest loss the Grin had suffered thus far in Outland.

As the Alliance has surmised, the Warchief never intended to fight for A'dal. The portal to Shadowmoon Valley provided Gorfrunch with the opportunity to kill another of his hated adversaries. Kurdran Wildhammer resided within the Wildhammer Stronghold and served as the benefactor to the Midnight Reveries against the Dread Horde. The death of Warlord Faquarl had shaken the coalition. A former member of the Blacktooth Grin and current member of Suncrown saw Gorfrunch as the reason the Dread Horde was beginning to lose the war in Outland. Arkonn blamed Gorfrunch for the death of Faquarl.

The final battle took place against the immense Wildhammer Stronghold. The Alliance scrambled to return to Kurdran, fearing that they had been once again outfoxed by the Blacktooth Grin. Against the wishes of Khadgar, the Alliance forces tapped into the power of the Sliver of Orodur and magnified the strength of the dwarven defenders. Once again deep inside a dwarven citadel, the Grin faced defeat and once again it came at the hands of a traitor. The blood elf Arkonn challenged the Warchief to Mak'gora within the midst of battle. The Warchief was enraged and savagely beat the blood elf, taking his eye. However, Arkonn was able to stab Gorfrunch's Smashblade and push him into a pit of fel fire. With the Warchief's death the Grin sounded he retreat. A'dal's forces rounded up the remnants of the Blacktooth Grin and imprisoned them within Garadar.

### ***The Aftermath of Smashblade, July 2008***

With the Blacktooth Grin imprisoned in Garadar the clan vowed revenge against Suncrown and quickly sought to rebuild from their devastating losses. While the Far Seer Grimnir was the obvious choice as a successor to the Smashblade, it was the protégé of Faquarl who ascended to the rank of Warchief in the Grin. Being a tauren, Ashenrock's tenure as Warchief was a vast break in tone for the warrior mentality of the Grin.

Though Ashenrock provided a steady and calming presence for the clan, he was not above attacking the Alliance to ensure the safety of the Blacktooth Grin. Ashenrock's first act as Warchief was to defy the Naaru's arrogance and free the Grin from their imprisonment. Ashenrock led the Blacktooth Grin back through the Dark Portal. Though the Alliance were attempting to recover from the previous war with the Grin, they launched their remaining reserves to stop the Grin from returning to Azeroth. The Blacktooth Grin fought the Alliance with fierce hatred. They slaughtered any who would stand in their way and added hundreds of corpses to the Road of Glory leading to the Dark Portal.

Ashenrock guided the Grin to victory in many of their endeavors, until the return of Yagyu. Yagyu was a legendary orcish warrior of the Grin who had gone into exile after the campaign in Khaz Modan. His return promised the Grin a chance for new glory and the

opportunity to once again wage full war against the nations of the Alliance.

### ***The Desolace Plains, November 2008***

The Desolace Plains was the third campaign launched by the Blacktooth Grin. It was the first campaign not to be developed by Gorfrunch and Faquarl and was instead led by the new Warchief Yagyu. The campaign was designed to create engaging World RP-PVP to lesser traveled zones in Kalimdor.

With the Blacktooth Grin's leadership passing so many hands within a short period of time, the new Warchief of the Grin, Yagyu, felt the need to assert his dominance over the clan and the Dread Horde alike. He planned to launch an attack against the small Alliance outpost of Nigel's Pointe in Desolace to force a reprisal from the Alliance against New Horde outposts. Yagyu planned on expanding the influence of the Blacktooth Grin into Kalimdor by creating conditions the rural outposts would be unable to defend against without aid. The plan almost succeeded. The new Warchief got the response he wanted, however he failed to anticipate the strength of the Alliance in the wilds of Kalimdor. The Alliance forces quickly stormed and captured Shadowprey Village and established a foothold within the Troll fishing settlement. Holding the choke point at the pass of Shadowprey, the Alliance repulsed all of the Dread Horde counterattacks. In a surprising defeat, the Grin were forced to retreat to Camp Mojache in Ferelas.

As the Grin regrouped in Camp Mojache, the Alliance took the opportunity to sail to the Feathermoon Stronghold. A combined force of the Midnight Reveries, Grim Covenant and Keepers of Stromgarde successfully lured half of the outnumbered forces of the Grin and Ravenwolf to Feathermoon, while the bulk of the Alliance attacked Camp Mojache. The few remaining defenders from the Grin and Lament of the Highborne left at the Tauren Camp were quickly overwhelmed as a wave of Alliance forces swept over them. The morale of the Alliance soared as they were quickly establishing dominance in Kalimdor and they continued their march toward the borders of Horde territory in the Thousand Needles.

In a desperate defense, Yagyu gathered up the remnants of the Dread Horde. He called upon the Thunderhoof Clan to reinforce his standing coalition army. To end the Alliance offensive, the Grin split its army in half. One force was to remain in the Thousand Needles and harass the Alliance as they burned through New Horde settlements. The other half of Yagyu's army marched into the Barrens and quickly established a defense in Camp Taurajo.

Predictably, the Alliance attacked Freewind Post. Freewind Post represented a logistical challenge for the Alliance, one the Blacktooth Grin was highly adept at exploiting. The tall bluff proved impossible to scale, as the Dread Horde force that was left to defend harried Alliance soldiers, pushing many off the high cliffs to their death. The attack never established a foothold on the bluff and the Alliance instead decided to invade the Barrens, just as the Grin had anticipated. In Camp Taurajo, the Grin forces hid themselves behind buildings on the south side of the camp. The Alliance attempted to overwhelm the camp

and quickly establish dominance for their Main Supply Route to pass from Feralas. To cut off any further retreat by the Blacktooth Grin, the Alliance attacked the Flight Master. The Dread Horde waited patiently for the Alliance to engross themselves in fighting the city guards. When the opportunity arose the Dread Horde successfully flanked the Alliance, forcing them to flee the camp and retreat toward the Thousand Needles.

The Grin forces that had stayed behind in the Thousand Needles had followed the Alliance and secured the elevators, blocking the Alliance's only method of escape. The final battle wedged the Alliance between the Dread Horde army, where only the Kirin'Tor mages could provide any sort of escape as the Grin crushed the largest Alliance force on Kalimdor.

Although the losses at the beginning of the campaign nearly broke the Clan's confidence in their new Warchief, Yagyu rallied the Grin with his clear victory in the Barrens. News of the success spread to Orgrimmar where Thrall extended a cautious but congratulatory message to Yagyu. Thrall summoned Yagyu, who he hoped would be more receptive to the New Horde, to discuss the Grin's status as outlaws. Upon arriving, the Grin was shocked to see undead forces in service of the Lich King attacking Orgrimmar. Yagyu led the Grin in joining the battle against the undead.

After repelling the initial attack, Yagyu met with Thrall and Garrosh Hellscream. While Yagyu refused to accept the existence of the New Horde, he did accept a truce being led to believe the emerging threat from Northrend would prevent the Grin from establishing the Dread Horde as the dominant Horde coalition. In exchange for an end to the Grin's attacks on New Horde outposts, Yagyu was made the commander of Conquest Hold being built in the Grizzly Hills under supervision of Garrosh Hellscream. Further, Yagyu pledged to defend attacks on Orgrimmar. Upon completion of the negotiations, the Grin officially moved out of Stagalbog Cave and a new era as a militant arm of the New Horde began.

### ***Demons of the Blacktooth, January 2009***

Long ago, Gul'dan created the Shadow Council to guide the Horde from behind the scenes. One of their darkest creations were the orcish Death Knights, great slain orcish warriors whose spirits were infused in the bodies of fallen knights of the Alliance. Under the leadership of the coward Doomhammer, the Horde ostracized the Necrolytes who participated in the creation of the Death Knights. While most of the clans were destroyed, a few were able to survive by hiding from the Orcish Horde in the hidden recesses of Azeroth.

The Spiritblade Clan was one such group who still practiced the art of spirit binding. The clan managed to survive by hiding in the mountains surrounding Deadwind Pass, close to Kharazan tower's reality warping energies. Reclusive by nature, the Spiritblade Clan avoided contact with the Blacktooth Grin while the clan claimed the Stagalbog Cave as their home. The clan was only discovered when the orc warlock Bok'theg discovered

their name in ancient tomes he had procured from Outland. Bok'theg found that the Spiritblade Clan had escaped the sundering of Outland when Ner'zhul began searching for powerful magical artifacts. With no known record of their destruction, Bok'theg began searching the areas surrounding the Dark Portal.

Upon their initial discovery, the Spiritblade Clan detained Bok'theg in order to ascertain his intentions. Unfortunately for the Warchief, Bok'theg intended to recruit the Spiritblade Clan in bringing back the legendary Warchief Gorfrunch Smashblade.

Bok'theg disdained working under the banner of the New Horde and viewed Yagyu as a usurper ruining the legacy of the Blacktooth Grin. With the Grin establishing dominance in the Grizzly Hills, Bok'theg saw an opportunity to undermine Yagyu and restore Gorfrunch to the mantle of Warchief. However, Bok'theg did not intend on remaining powerless in a new regime, as he had captured the Smashblade's soul within a soul shard and intended to use it to control the former Warchief.

The chieftain of the Spiritblade clan refused to meet with the warlock and instead sent the Necrolyte Virroth to negotiate terms over the ritual. Virroth pledged to aid the warlock under the condition that the Spiritblade clan be able to assimilate with the Blacktooth Grin. Virroth recognized the Blacktooth Grin would be accepting of their rituals and would provide the souls needed to revive the practice of creating Death Knights.

The Necrolyte Virroth personally oversaw the resurrection of Gorfrunch Smashblade. He oversaw a vicious tournament within the Spiritblade clan. The gladiators of the Spiritblade clan were all nameless, as their sole purpose was to act as a vessel for the fallen Warchief. Each gladiator carried a Kris to execute their opponent and absorb their spiritual essence. The winner of the tournament stood before the Necrolyte Virroth and offered him his soul infused Kris. Accepting the ceremonial dagger, Virroth used it to tear the Smashblade's soul from the confines of Bok'theg's soul stone and stabbed the nameless gladiator's heart. The Smashblade's soul, having been infused with the souls of the fallen gladiators, quickly overpowered the gladiator. The orcish gladiator began violently writhing as his body began twisting and changing shape. When the gladiator rose from the ground, he bore the visage and soul of the legendary Smashblade.

Though the Smashblade had returned, his will was not his own. The warlock Bok'theg still had the warchief's soul tethered to his soul stone and his plans to usurp Yagyu were put into motion.

Bok'theg entered Conquest Hold with both the Smashblade and Virroth in tow. Warchief Yagyu was utterly shocked to see his mentor alive before his eyes. Yagyu approached the Smashblade and saluted the legendary orc, welcoming him back into the clan. Virroth explained to Yagyu the existence of his clan and pledged allegiance to the Blacktooth Grin on behalf of the Spiritblade chieftain. Yagyu happily accepted the Spiritblade and praised their role in the return of the Smashblade.

Weeks passed and Bok'theg made preparations to usurp Yagyu. He commanded the

Smashblade to initiate a Mak'gora against Yagyu to reclaim the mantle of Warchief. Yagyu was stunned but accepted the challenge. Both challengers prepared for the battle to the death overnight. While Yagyu grimly prepared to face his hero and mentor, the Smashblade began preparing on how to rebel against the power hungry warlock who currently controlled him. The Smashblade summoned the Warlord Shadiel and provided him details on his resurrection. The Smashblade told the blood elf that upon his victory, the Warlord would have to be executed to prevent a rebellion of sympathizers to Yagyu's rule. In issuing this threat, the Smashblade showed Shadiel the Kris used in the ritual that resurrected the former war chief.

Shadiel recognized the blade from the Second War and confronted Virroth to find how the Smashblade's soul could be procured. The Necrolyte explained that Bok'theg brought the soul within a ruby soul stone for extraction. Warlord Shadiel relayed this information to his Warchief, who now understood that the warlock was planning a coup against him using the Smashblade as his weapon.

On the day of the Mak'gora, Yagyu and the Smashblade dueled for the title of Warchief. The former war chief proved to be more adept in single combat than his former pupil. The Smashblade brought his axe down against Yagyu cutting deep into the Warchief's flesh. Yagyu took this opportunity to take the Kris from the Smashblade's sheath and stab the former war chief in the heart. The Smashblade collapsed as his soul was absorbed by the Kris.

Yagyu then had the Grin bring forward the traitor Bok'theg. As Yagyu announced the warlock's execution, the Spiritblade Kris containing the empowered soul of the Smashblade reacted with the warlock's soul stone cracking the soul stone. Bok'theg realized the Smashblade had intended for this moment and was attempting to destroy the object of his imprisonment from within. The warlock convinced Yagyu to return the Kris to Virroth and restore the Smashblade into a controllable vessel before the enraged former war chief broke free and executed the both of them. Yagyu agreed with the warlock, but took the soul stone for himself.

Virroth resurrected the Death Knight, who came back under the control of Yagyu. Yagyu only intended to imprison his mentor until he could be made to accept him as Chieftain and allow the Grin a chance to move forward. While the Smashblade appeared grateful for Yagyu's mercy, his plan had been set in motion. The cracked soul stone held little power over the fallen Warchief. He need only bide his time until his eventual return as Warchief of the Blacktooth Grin.

### ***The Fall of Stromgarde, March 2009***

The Fall of Stromgarde is the fourth campaign launched on the Venture Co. server and is the first to be launched by an Alliance guild. The Keepers of Stromgarde organized the campaign which heavily relied on the experience of the Blacktooth Grin, their mortal enemies.

Now having firmly established himself as the dominant leader of the Blacktooth Grin, Yagyu called a meeting of the Dread Horde at Sun Rock Retreat to discuss the future of the powerful alliance. While on the way there, Yagyu and Ashenrock were ambushed by assassins bearing the tabard of the Keepers of Stromgarde. While the attempt was unsuccessful, one of the assassins's managed to stab Yagyu with a heavily poisoned dagger and Ashenrock suffered grave injuries entering a catatonic state. Both the current and former Warchiefs were evacuated to Mulgore by the Thunderhoof Clan in order to heal them of their wounds. The assassination attempt was secretly engineered by the newly resurrected Gorfrunch Smashblade in an attempt to both remove his potential rivals and galvanize the bickering Dread Horde into once more following the Grin to war against the Keepers of Stromgarde.

In retaliation for the attack, the Smashblade rallied the Dread Horde against Refuge Pointe to punish the refugees for the actions of their protectors. The Keepers of Stromgarde were caught off guard by this ruthless attack as they had received reports of the Blacktooth Grin establishing themselves in Northrend, far from the Kingdom of Strom.

The soldiers of Stromgarde quickly rallied to the defense of the small encampment but only found a small contingent of the Dread Horde there to meet them. The refugees all lay dead and the Dread Horde openly taunted the revolted defenders. The Keepers engaged the Dread Horde forces to make them pay for their crimes.

However, this force was merely a feint as Gorfrunch had assembled the main body of his army behind Thoradin's wall. Using siege weaponry and his elite rogue squadron, Stromgarde Keep lay under siege. The dwarf Keeper Stonemug was left with a small contingency of Keepers to defend the Keep. The Keeper force left unprotected in the Highlands soon found itself cut off from their keep by a massive Dread Horde army. By cutting off both supplies and reinforcements the Grin siege began to break both the walls and the Keepers resolve. Inevitably, the Grin's war machines broke through the Keep's defenses and the Dread Horde laid claim to the capital of Arathor. Stonemug led the remaining survivors out of the Keep through secret tunnels and rejoined Stromgarde's exiled army in Menethil. The Blacktooth Grin left House Suncrown to occupy the Keep under heavy guard due to their past betrayals. The Grin tracked the Keepers across the Arathi Highlands to finally slay their mortal enemies.

Meanwhile, Yagyu's physical wounds had been healed by the druids of Thunderhoof, but the Warchief continued to suffer from immense pain. Ashenrock returned to Conquest Hold to recover. Rather than finding a peaceful solace, the former warchief found Bok'theg had been sapping Yagyu's life-force to continue to power the cracked soul stone that controlled the Smashblade.

Ashenrock overpowered the traitorous warlock and brought him before Yagyu. The Warchief became enraged with bloodlust having been betrayed once again by the scheming warlock. The orc warrior shattered the soul stone and imprisoned Bok'theg to face execution. He then made his journey to Arathi to lead his clan during one of its finest

hours.

However, the destruction of the soul stone had finally freed the Smashblade from outside influence. Gorfrunch led the Grin to the gates of Menethil to continue the battle against the Keepers of Stromgarde. Warchief Yagyu joined the Grin as Gorfrunch began the siege of Menethil. Yagyu took command of his forces and berated Gorfrunch for his recklessness.

Yagyu altered the Smashblade's strategy and opted instead to ram the gates and meet the Keepers of Stromgarde in a glorious final battle. The dwarf Stonemug led the remnants of the Keepers with grim resolve as they prepared for Yagyu's charge. As Yagyu charged over the bridge, Gorfrunch countermanded his former pupil's orders and demanded the Grin hold and allow their Warchief to charge into battle alone. The Grin obeyed their legendary Warchief.

The Keepers, seeing Yagyu deserted by his troops, waited for their Commander's orders fire. Having lost their homeland to their most hated enemy, Stonemug ordered his men to strike down the Warchief. In the end, Yagyu was killed by Stonemug and the Keepers of Stromgarde and Gorfrunch finally stood unopposed in his takeover of the Blacktooth Grin.

### ***Northern Wars, Winter 2009***

The Blacktooth Grin that Gorfrunch returned to was in a completely different place than when he led them in their campaign in Outland. The Grin had sworn allegiance to the Peace chief and had established themselves in Northrend as an official detachment of New Horde troops. The Grin now also possessed Stromgarde Keep, a symbol of humankind's dominance brought down under the heel of the Blacktooth Grin.

In order to manage this stratified Grin, the Warchief looked once again to a member of the Swiftpride tribe. Rawlk Swiftpride was the son of Gorfrunch's trusted Warlord Faquarl. To the Smashblade's delight, Rawlk was far more militant than his deceased father while inheriting his father's knack for discipline. Rawlk was raised to be Gorfrunch's Warlord and was given command of Conquest Hold. Gorfrunch had no intention of fighting the Lich King, he instead ordered his Warlord to begin attacking the Alliance outposts surrounding Conquest Hold. To his credit, Garrosh Hellscream supported the Blacktooth Grin's efforts to destroy the Alliance who had been undermining the Horde's efforts in Northrend.

In Northrend, Rawlk led the Grin to multiple successes against the Alliance. In the Howling Fjord, the Grin razed the half built port of Valgarde and Fort Wildervar. The remnants of the Keepers of Stromgarde attempted to attack the Grin through the Howling Fjord, but their efforts were quickly squashed. In the largest battle against the Keepers, the Grin confused a local giant into joining the battle. The Keepers were caught off guard by the lumbering behemoth and the Grin flanked them as they pathetically attempted to

hold off the beast.

The Midnight Reveries had also established themselves within Wintergarde Keep and fought under the legendary leader of the 7<sup>th</sup> Legion, High Commander Halford Wyrmbane. Rawlk led many battles against the Keep, routing the Reveries and defeating the High Commander within his own walls. Wintergarde Keep was often used as means to test the combat capabilities of new grots, as any future member of the Grin was expected to be able to fend off the well trained guards of Wintergarde Keep.

In Stromgarde Keep, Gorfrunch led the offensive against the Keepers of Stromgarde. Most Keepers had fled in exile to Stormwind having lost their homeland to their most hated enemy. Their crown prince Galen Trollbane was killed at the hands of the Blacktooth Grin and their hero Danath Trollbane was still recovering from the grievous wounds suffered from his last engagement with the Blacktooth Grin.

Many months had passed and Gorfrunch began noticing a marked weakness in controlling his body. The soul stone that Yagyu had destroyed was tethered to Gorfrunch's own spirit. With the destruction of the stone, the Warchief's spirit continued leaving his vessel. Without any action, Gorfrunch would die. The Warchief summoned Rawlk and Virroth to his command post in Stromgarde Keep. The Necrolyte Virroth had never seen someone in Gorfrunch's condition and advised that he may find a solution in Outland where the Shadow Council originally developed the rituals to create Death Knights. Rather than continue the mistakes of multiple Warchiefs, Gorfrunch promoted Rawlk to his Overlord, a rank that only the legendary Eddard had attained. Rawlk was charged with leading the Grin in his absence.

### ***Exodus to Stonard, Fall 2010***

In the aftermath of the Northern wars, Rawlk realized that the Blacktooth grin had spent years either occupying foreign lands or fighting causes that had no direct effect on their own interests. The Overlord assembled his Sythegars and instructed them to reclaim to the Clan's "ancient" homeland in the Swamp of Sorrows and begin planning on reforging the Blacktooth Grin into the most threatening force in the region.

The Blacktooth Grin's exodus to the Swamps of Sorrows was not done swiftly. Instead the Overlord wished to instill the Grin with an earned confidence, that this was not a retreat, but a new chapter in their long legacy. Over course of the following weeks and months, the Grin systematically destroyed Alliance holdings in Northrend. Once their tour of Northrend had ended, the Grin once again raided the port of Valgarde to commandeer their ship to Menethil. Menethil Harbor was a favorite target of the Grin as they sacked the port and rampaged across the Wetlands, recovering arms and supplies from Refuge Pointe and Southshore. As the Grin marched back into Arathi, Rawlk ordered his men to take all of the supplies from Stromgarde Keep and let the citadel burn until the Keepers desired to put it out.

Having packed many of the Grin's kudos with supplies and further expanding the ranks of the Dread Horde, Rawlk moved the bulk of his forces south, battling their way through a small holding force at the Than'dol Span. The remnants of the Keepers of Stromgarde had heard that the Grin had razed their once glorious home and immediately began pursuit to bring the Blacktooth Grin to justice for the final time. However, the Sythegars of the Grin had prepared an ambush, and as they carved their way south to Anvilmar, a secondary Dread Horde force led by the Dark Clan of Fenris had been secretly assembled at Tarren Mill and was moving to flank the Keepers.

This reserve force swept across the massive bridge between Khaz Modan and old Arathor just as armies of Stromgarde were regrouping and gathering to cross it. Surprised by this second unannounced army, Stromgarde was routed once again, and crushed.

Meanwhile, tactical squadrons burned the harbors at Menethil in order to prevent reinforcements from Theramoore from reaching the main column. For days, the Grin hold out at Anvilmar, while the Dread Horde forces assembled there, and finally began to press South, laying waste to Thelsamar and securing passage through the Stonewrought Pass into the Searing Gorge. There, in the shadows of Blackrock, the combined Dread Horde forces met with a coalition of Alliance calling themselves "The War Council," consisting mainly of forces from Stormwind, Darkshire, Lakeshire, and the survivors of the Keepers.

A series of grim battles ensued as the War Council attempted to hold off the Dread Horde forces at Blackrock.

But it was not to be. The Dread Horde pressed the War Council in a series of battles from Blackrock Mountain all the way South to Darkshire, before then turning west and rampaging through the streets of Stormwind itself. Caught entirely by surprise by this massive and unannounced force, the various legions charged with defending Stormwind were scattered and routed. The Dread Horde marched to Stonard in victory, and ever since, the drums of war have pounded without cease in the dark swamps.

With the Grin having collected a large reserve of supplies from their contributions in Northrend, Rawlk began restructuring the Grin. The goal was to strip the Grin of any laziness it had acquired serving the Peace Chief and create a regimented fighting force to be feared across Azeroth.

### ***The Cataclysm and the Discovery of Pandaria, Winter 2010 - Present Day***

And on, and on it weaves. The Grin continued to strengthen every year week, but their prey grew ever scarcer. With the ascension of Garrosh Hellscream as Warchief, the Grin had finally assimilated into a Horde that valued their vision. The Smashblade continued to allow his lieutenants to manage his clan, so long as they remained unquestioningly loyal to him. Following the Fourth War, the Alliance had drawn back from their lands. The Keepers of Stromgarde were no more. The Midnight Reveries had also been defeated and the Wildhammer dwarves cowered without their champions. New foes arose, such as the Knights of Dusk. However, the nightly sacking of Darkshire had created unrest within the

ranks of the Blacktooth Grin.

Undeterred by the reemergence of Deathwing, the Blacktooth Grin have rebuilt the fortress at Rockard, which after the destruction of the Dark Portal became known as Stonemaul Hold. They have also laid claim to the embattled outpost at Render's Valley, and have begun negotiations with the remaining Blackrock Orcs there, offering them defense in return for their allegiance. Overall, the Grin have laid claim to the entirety of southeastern Azeroth, cutting off Nethergarde Keep and pressing further north toward Blackrock, while keeping constant pressure on the Knights of Dusk in Darkshire.

Too many battles to list have been fought. Many decisive victories, and many follies. Each leader of the Alliance has fallen to the Blacktooth Grin and nearly every Alliance town on Azeroth has lost a loved one to the Blacktooth Grin.

The war rages on, guild rise and other fall, yet the Blacktooth Grin remains. The discovery of Pandaria provided the Grin a new front in their war, however the Warchief found no glory in the slaying of fat farmers and dullards. Instead the Blacktooth Grin joined Garrosh's efforts in defeating the Alliance on the many fronts that have opened up over the years. Night after night, week after week, and the Grin has fought growing in both power and influence. Yet now there is uncertainty, as the Warchief has been deposed and a Troll now claims to be the Warchief of the Horde. Further, familiar war drums have been heard from the Grin stronghold of Stonard, emanating from the Dark Portal. The future has mercilessly rolled on, and yet the Grin continues to show Azeroth that the past is not so easily forgotten.

As you begin your application process, you should be aware that this guild has a long and storied history which you will be called upon to preserve and continue.

## Chapter Four: Character Creation

Before you apply to join, you need to make decisions about your Character, aside from a race and class combination with a certain level, set of talents, and equipment. Not character (small “c”) in the WoW sense, but Character (big “C”) in the storytelling sense. Who are you? What motivates you? Where did you come from? Where do you want to go?

To start with, you need to know the rough timeline.

Years ago - Event Description:

- 35 - Gul'dan creates the Orcish Horde, Battle of Shattrath, Frostwolf skirmishes.
- 34 - The destruction of Stormwind, death of Blackhand.
- 28 - Destruction of the Horde and Dark Portal. Internment era begins.
- 27 - Ner'zhul builds new Horde on Draenor, destroys the world, and becomes the Lich King.
- 17 - Warsong Clan enters Azeroth.
- 16 - Thrall escapes slavery, falls in with the Warsong.
- 14 - Return of Doomhammer. Thrall learns shamanism. Insurrection and Third War. Orcs flee to Kalimdor. Scourge destroys Lordaeron, and Silvermoon. Tauren join the Horde.
- 13 - Founding of Durotar. Arthas assumes the Frozen Throne.
- 11 - Completion of Orgrimmar.
- 9 - World of Warcraft MMO begins. Forsaken join the Horde.
- 8 - Burning Crusade begins in Outland. Blood elves join the Horde.
- 7 - Northrend campaign begins.
- 6 - Arthas Menethil is slain in Icecrown Citadel.
- 5 - Deathwing Returns, The Second Sundering breaks the world.
- 4 - Present day. Hellscream the Younger leads the Horde to war.
- 2- Theramoore is destroyed using a Mana Bomb
- 2- Pandaria is discovered
- 0- Orgrimmar is sacked and Warchief Garrosh is convicted of war crimes.

As you can see, your character could not have been born in Orgrimmar and raised in Durotar unless he or she were only eleven or twelve years old (without serious warlock intervention--there is a precedent).

Similarly, if you are playing Forsaken, you've been that way for about fourteen years, so if you were in your twenties when you died, you were born about the same time that the Orcs first came to Azeroth. Situating your character's background in the timeline helps you avoid common back story clichés and gives your application a better chance at being accepted.

## *Notes on the Guild Application*

The application to join the Blacktooth Grin can be found at <http://www.fearthegrin.org>. All recruits must register on the Blacktooth Grin website, as this requirement is never, ever waived. While roleplaying is not a requirement to join the Blacktooth Grin, tolerance of role-players is. The Grin has built a long history of successfully melding role-play into a world class non instanced PvP environment. Effort to join the Grin in continuing this legacy and treating fellow clan members with all due respect is closely monitored in new recruits.

The guild application is very imposing. We are a large guild, and we are always eager to add more quality players to our ranks, but we also demand excellence in our recruits.

## *Character Races*

This brief section provides some additional questions and ideas relating to character races that might help you flesh out your character, and create a more informed, well rounded back story.

### **Blood Elf (Sin'dorei)**

1. If you're playing a Blood Elf, were you born before or after the destruction of the Sunwell?
2. If before, how old are you?
3. Did you participate in the second war, and how did you react to the Internment?
4. What are your feelings regarding the Kirin Tor and their abuse of magic that were entrusted to them by the elves?
5. Did you fight in the Troll Wars against the Amani?
6. How does this affect your interactions with Trolls in the Horde?
7. Did you approve of your leaders' decision to join Thrall's Horde?
8. How do you feel about the breakdown of the rigid class hierarchy in elven society, and the decay of discipline among the youth?
9. If you were born after the destruction of the Sunwell, you're practically a child, surrounded by elves who might be hundreds or thousands of years old. Do you resent your elders?
10. How do you feel about authority?

### **Forsaken**

1. If you're playing a Forsaken, which of the seven kingdoms of Lordaeron did you call home?
2. What was your opinion of elves, prior to the orcish wars?
3. Did you fight in the first or second wars?
4. How did that affect your opinion of the orcs?
5. What was your reaction to the internment?
6. Did you know anyone who fell to the plague, or have to fight off those you loved, only

- to succumb to the nightmare yourself?
7. What are your feelings about being led by the elf Sylvanas?
  8. How do you feel about her decision to create new Forsaken, through the use of Vrykul necromancy?
  9. Did you oppose her decision to ally with the Orcs against the humans?
  10. Do the Forsaken have a right to raise the dead and spread the plague?

## **Orc**

1. What clan are you descended from?
2. Did they sympathize with the Frostwolves and oppose Gul'dan?
3. Did they strongly sympathize with Gul'dan and Blackhand, or did they just follow orders?
4. Were you born before, or during the Internment? (If you were born after the Internment, you'd be ten years old or younger today)
5. What memories do you have of the Internment?
6. What memories do you have of the second and first wars, if any?
7. What of the Draenic wars?
8. Did you approve of Thrall's peace with the humans, or see it as a betrayal of those who suffered in the camps?
9. Did you yourself drink the blood of Mannoroth?
10. If you fought in any of the Three Wars, what were your thoughts of your officers and leaders?

## **Tauren**

1. The Shu'halo of Kalimdor have only lived in their plateau stronghold of Thunder Bluff for the better part of a single decade. Traditionally, tribes of the western Minotaur lived nomadic lifestyles on the vast and untamed plains of the far west. Into which of these tribes were you born?
2. Do you remember life before Thunder Bluff?
3. Did you accept Cairne Bloodhoof's call to build the city on the hill and to settle into it like the humans do, or did you reject that life?
4. How did you feel about the Forsaken taking over the caverns on the spirit rise?
5. Are you surprised that, without the tribes of Tauren living in the wild parts of the Southern Barrens, the humans were able to so easily move in?
6. What of the massive wall that closes off Mulgore from the rest of Kalimdor?
7. Now that Theramore has become expansionist force in Kalimdor, and Northwatch forces are spilling west into the Mountains, what do you think about Cairne and Thrall's long term strategy of peace with the humans?
8. How do you feel about Cairne's death in Mak'gora against Garrosh Hellscream?
9. Do you agree with Baine Bloodhoof's alliance with Jaina Proudmore and Anduin Wrynn?
10. Do you feel the Shu'halo continue to owe orcs a debt for ending the nomadic lifestyle of the tauren following Garrosh's tenure as Warchief?

## **Troll**

1. The Darkspear Tribe is only one of the many troll populations on Kalimdor, and arguably not even the largest or most important. The Amani trolls fought wars with the elves of Quel'Thalas. The Sandfury trolls of the far south carved an empire out of the mountain deserts of Tanaris. The forest trolls of Stranglethorn also have their own rich culture. Indeed, troll culture is probably the most diverse, and the most varied among all the races of the Horde, with incredible variety and opportunity for development. Which of these many troll tribes did your character come from?
2. What Loa gods did your people worship?
3. Were your tribe wielders of horrible magic?
4. Were you a cannibal?
5. Were you seafaring pirate such as a Bloodsail Buccaneer?
6. Were you a slave of the dark gods?
7. Were you a simple coastal fishermen?
8. How do you feel about the Zandalari calling for all of the troll clans to unite?
9. How do you feel about Garrosh's assassination attempt of Vol'jin and Vol'jin's following coup?
10. How do you feel about Vol'jin becoming Warchief of the Horde?

## **Goblin**

1. Goblins have had a long history with the Orcish Horde and following the Second War have gained a renowned history of neutrality. Most Goblins are employed by a larger Cartel. Which Cartel are you employed by?
2. Did you serve in the Second War?
3. Does money buy your loyalty or are you swayed by righteous causes?
4. Did you prefer the stable political climate under Thrall or the war economy created by Garrosh?
5. How does your character feel about trolls, knowing of their dark past enslaving your people?
6. Do you support Trade Prince Gallywix as the representative of Goblin-kind for the Horde?
7. What is your opinion on gnomish contributions to the field of engineering?
8. How do you feel about Fizzle & Pozzik's Speedbarge?
9. Are you mechanically minded or more business savvy?
10. Do you support the alchemical bio-engineering of Hobgoblins and the broader implications of alchemy creating new creations (Ex. Two-Headed Ogres or Fel Orcs)?

## **Pandaren**

1. Pandaren have been cut off from the majority of the world for thousands of years. Their interactions with both the Horde and the Alliance have only been formed within the last two years and the race has only seen these factions under the rule of Garrosh Hellscream and Varian Wrynn. Why did you choose to join the Horde?
2. How do you feel about Pandaren who chose to join the Alliance?

3. Which clan do you come from?
4. Were you born in Pandaria or on the Wandering Isle?
5. What is your opinion on the teachings of the Celestials?
6. If born on Pandaria, which aspect of the sha did you struggle the most to control?
7. How do you feel about Garrosh's destruction of the Vale of Eternal Blossoms?
8. Who do you look to as a leader of your people?
9. Do you experience "Wanderlust"?
10. Although you are Horde, do you associate yourself more with the Tushui or the Huojin?

## Chapter Five: Character Development

Much like a poem, character development is never finished, only abandoned. In this chapter we will take you beyond the confines of race, class and concept into the finer details of character development.

Long ago, White Wolf Games published a family of storytelling games of personal horror. What set these games apart from role-playing games that came before them, is that they placed an essential emphasis on the development of character. Character, as we would develop for telling a story, not character as a mere vehicle for equipment and statistical combat. We borrow some of the elements of that era in order to help expand and develop the range of character development in the Grin. Life in an old-fashioned Orcish clan can quickly become a story of personal horror, where deeply flawed characters commit acts of unspeakable barbarism and suffer the tragic consequences in the pursuit of glory.

### *Mary Sue: A Precautionary Note*

One of the common practices of RP neophytes is the creation of a “Mary Sue” character. A Mary Sue (sometimes just Sue), in fan fiction, is a fictional character with overly idealized and hackneyed mannerisms, lacking noteworthy flaws, and primarily functioning as a wish-fulfillment fantasy for the player that is unrealistic in the context of the medium. Perhaps the single underlying feature of all characters described as “Mary Sues” is that they are too ostentatious for the audience's taste, or that their creator seems to favor the character too highly. In RP, the player may seem to push how exceptional and wonderful the “Mary Sue” character is on his or her audience, sometimes leading the audience to dislike or even resent the character (or, more commonly the player) fairly quickly.

Mary Sue characters are often closely related to or involved with a powerful and famous figure in the world. For example, “Thrall’s former lover”, or “Uther Lightbringer’s bastard son, killed by the Scourge and risen as a Death Knight”, or “Orgrim Doomhammer’s personal assassin”, or “Jaina Proudmoore’s Twin Sister” or “Grom Hellscream’s mentor” are all impossibly well connected characters, and if they existed, Blizzard would have told us by now. Conversely, if your character was the nameless Peon tasked with hauling out Orgrim Doomhammer’s chamber pot and feeding soup bones to his worg during the second war, that’s different. The task was mundane, impersonal, inglorious, and Orgrim probably never knew your name. Just the same, powerful and famous people are surrounded by no-names in real everyday life. These are the people who bake the bread, shovel the shit, and make the world go ‘round.

And who’s to say they don’t grow up to be heroes?

Mary Sue characters are also all too often the product of some impossibly remarkable circumstance. Was your character an immensely powerful high elf wizard who designed the fortress at Nethergarde, but years later betrayed his good friend King Terenas of Lordaeron and was summarily executed and risen as a zombie slave by a retroactive warlock, who was then improbably slain by the Scourge, after which your character

regained his or her own free will only to cleverly blend in with the Forsaken?

No. Forsaken were human citizens of the seven kingdoms of Lordaeron. There's nothing wrong with having been a human before the Scourge came. Maybe you were a cobbler. Nothing wrong with that. Now you stab people and eat their corpses, because that's what the Forsaken have been reduced to. Making your character come from Quel'thelas doesn't make them interesting in the same way that their choices throughout their life will. You don't need to play an elven forsaken. Or a half elven forsaken. Or a Tauren Farstrider. Or an Orcish witch doctor. The lore is already rich and compelling and interesting enough to build memorable characters with, and these "quirks" are not colorful additions to your character. They're hackneyed and trite role-playing tropes that we have seen, literally, hundreds of times before, and you don't need them to make your character interesting.

No, your warlock was not infected with a demon when he was a baby, and raised on the elemental plane of torment. Yes, your Forsaken character feels pain when something cracks its skull open. No, your shaman is not ten thousand years old. Yes, your character gets scared. Often. War is hell, man.

No, your level 15 mage is not an ancient and powerful demigod and heir apparent of the royal families of Quel'thelas. You're not Merlin, or Strider, or Drizzt, or Gandalf. Or even humble Bilbo. You might be the impatient and castoff apprentice of a fusty and gluttonous mage hermit, though. Or the scion of a disgraced family whose names have been removed from the royal records because several hundred years ago they turned to exclusive inbreeding. Or something equally distasteful. By pushing your character out of the lore spotlight, and well into the margins of society, you bring yourself down into the gritty reality of fame--everyone seems to want it, it's maddeningly easy to come close to it, to see it just within your grasp, but to actually possess it is nearly impossible. When in doubt, apply this one rule: if you were famous already, Blizzard would have told us. If they didn't, then you aren't.

Mary Sue characters will not be tolerated in the Blacktooth Grin. You might make it through your inductions into Grothood, but what comes after won't be good for you or anyone else. The life of the grot is anathema to the existence of the Mary Sue character, and Grothood is in many ways designed to break and discourage players of Mary Sues. The best possible solution if you think you might be playing one is to completely start over your story, or dial back the epicosity from 11 to 2 (that is, substantially), learn about the lore of the world, figure out how your character really would fit into it, and get serious about your limitations. Heroism isn't a product of background, but of choices.

Ironically, most of the greatest heroes we've ever produced were humble and ordinary grots that rose to full membership because they reliably followed orders and held the line under duress, not extraordinary would-be celebrities clutching desperately at the hollow bones of fame.

### ***Merits and Flaws***

Merits and Flaws are traits you can assign to your character to help you develop their personality. The list below should help you gauge if you've made your character overly idealistic, or unusually flawed to the point being annoying or unplayable. Impossible perfection and impossible incompetence will be dealt with either by ritual flaying and humiliation, or chopping up the character and feeding what is left to the worgs. So don't go overboard.

When choosing from the following lists, go easy on the merits. And, for that matter, go easy on the flaws. One major, two minor from each column, at the absolute most. Don't pick an extreme merit or flaw for your main character--those are for player controlled NPCs, temporary villains, and the like. Think of merits and flaws as spices. Nobody sits down to eat a bowl of salt, pepper, and cayenne. In the same way that spices are not food, merits and flaws are not the meat of your character--they just add a little bit of flavor.

### ***Minor Merits***

- Acute Sense: You have very good vision, or hearing, or sense of smell.
- Berserker: You can enter into a state of controlled frenzy during battle. Many Orcs and Trolls are affected by this, and it makes them fearsome in combat.
- Calm: You are nigh impossible to excite or shake, and maintain your composure in stressful situations.
- Criminal Ties: You have contacts in criminal organizations, perhaps one of the Goblin cartels or perhaps in Orgrimmar or Undercity.
- Diplomatic Ties: You know a guy who knows a guy who can broker a meeting with powerful people. Not often, and not guaranteed, but it gives you a slight edge.
- Good with Animals: You have a way with animals. Your mount doesn't get skittish in battle.
- Higher Purpose: You serve a noble cause. It gives you comfort and inner strength.
- Honorable: Honor is the gift you give yourself. Nobody else can take it from you, and yours fills you with a sense of purpose and pride.
- Military Ties: You've earned the respect of soldiers in the Horde armies. From time to time you can call on them for favors.
- Reputation: Others speak well of you. People might even look up to you. Do not disappoint them.
- Self-Confident: You possess a lion's share of confidence in your ability to succeed and overcome obstacles. You are not easily discouraged.
- Disciplined: You have a natural affinity for discipline. You take orders well, and generally embrace military life.
- Resourceful: You don't have any special advantages, no special powers. You are just very, very resourceful.

### ***Minor Flaws***

- Addict: You are addicted to the consumption of a certain substance, and cannot function normally without it. Over time, you need more and more of it to maintain

- normalcy.
- Agoraphobic: You are afraid of outdoor spaces. Extreme aversions to the outdoors are not recommended, as they interfere with gameplay. You might prefer to fight indoors, instead.
  - Bad with Animals: Animals don't like you, and act nervously in your presence.
  - Claustrophobic: You are afraid of indoor spaces. Taken to extremes, this can be disruptive of normal play. Perhaps you just vastly prefer to fight on open ground.
  - Compulsion: You have a disruptive compulsive behavior that you struggle to control.
  - Criminal Enmity: You have attracted the ire of elements of the criminal underworld. Watch your back.
  - Cruel: You have an aversion to kindness and moderation in exercising authority, and earn a reputation for needless cruelty, either to your enemies or to others in the clan.
  - Dark Secret: A piece of information from your past haunts you. If others were to find out, you might be sent into exile, or even killed.
  - Deformed: You have suffered deforming injuries, making you ugly and revolting to look upon.
  - Diplomatic Enmity: You've attracted the ire of one or more of the Horde signatories, and must fear for your life when in their domain. It might be Orgrimmar, Undercity, etc.
  - Disingenuous: You have a reputation for being socially manipulative, and others find it hard to trust you.
  - Hatred: You harbor a severe hatred of someone or something, and it can easily affect your judgment.
  - Hubris: You believe yourself incapable of wrongdoing or error, and refuse to subject yourself or your motives to self-examination. This excessive pride is dangerous.
  - Illiterate: You cannot (or habitually do not) read.
  - Indebted: You owe someone money. A lot of it. And they want you to pay. If you don't they might start asking you to perform compromising favors for them.
  - Intolerance: You are intolerant of a certain type of behavior, person, race, class, or thing. It clouds your judgment.
  - Lazy: You actively avoid work, responsibility, and hinder the progress of others.
  - Low Self-Image: Your self-loathing is so powerful that it is contagious.
  - Military Enmity: You have attracted the ire of one or more Alliance guilds. They go out of their way to thwart and punish you in the field.
  - Naïve: You possess a childish view of the world, are ignorant to its many subtleties, and your lack of experience is a major liability.
  - Nightmares: You cannot sleep. Your dreams are haunted by vengeful spirits, haunting memories, or imagined terrors.
  - Notoriety: You have a bad reputation, and can't seem to shake it.
  - Old: You're old fashioned, and perhaps a bit out of touch with current affairs. Others might perceive you as dead weight if you don't keep up.
  - Out of Shape: You are weak or out of shape. This makes you sluggish, and attracts the wrong kind of attention from your officers.

- Overconfident: You consistently overestimate your own value or prowess, or else underestimate the skill or strength of your enemies.
- Paranoid: They're after you. They have agents following you. Others won't listen.
- Pawn: You feel you have no control over your life or circumstances, and are convinced that others are pulling the strings of your life. How can you take control back?
- Petty: You fret over meaningless, insignificant slights, and hold grudges over the least offenses. Your fickle and selfish nature is not lost on others.
- Phobia: You have a specific, irrational fear of something.
- Pitiable: You are pathetic, and inspire others to a sense of pity, putting yourself into their hands.
- Prey Exclusion: You have a soft spot about a certain type of Ally, and one of these days it's going to get you killed.
- Quick to Anger: You fly off the handle at the merest sign of stress, and have a reputation as a powder keg.
- Scatterbrained: Are you serious? We just covered this. Okay, I'll start over, just try to pay attention.
- Selfish: The world revolves around you, and you're not shy about reminding others of this.
- Shallow: You only care about appearances, what's on the outside.
- Shy: You are awkward and introverted in social situations.
- Soft-Hearted: You're a pushover. You bend toward mercy naturally, and others think you weak for it.
- Speech Impediment: Your speech is somewhat garbled, and others might not understand your orders.
- Territorial: You are extremely territorial, and thus predictable. You react violently toward incursions on your home turf, particularly by the Alliance.
- Traumatized: See Combat Trauma section (below)
- Twisted Upbringing: Your upbringing was unnaturally harsh, coarse, or isolating. You bear permanent social or physical wounds from those harrowing days.
- Ugly: You are as ugly as Old Margar honestly (like he did), people don't like to look at your face.
- Uneducated: You are completely unaware of the nature or history of the world around you.
- Unskilled: You have no skills and are nearly always short on cash. Maybe you just prefer killing things.
- Vengeful: You never, ever forgive a slight, and will carry a grudge until the end of days.
- Weak-Willed: Others have a very easy time pushing your buttons. Controlling you, compelling you, bending you to their will. Beware.

### ***Major Merits***

- Danger Sense: You have an uncanny ability to smell a trap and sense when danger is nearby.

- Daredevil: You are good at taking risks, and even better at surviving them.
- Dual Nature: You have a complex nature, which lets you draw willpower and spiritual sustenance from more than one aspect of your life.
- Iron Will: They just can't break you, much as you try.
- Luck: The devils look after their own, or else people just let you win.
- Medium: You can see past the veil into the spirit world.
- Occult Library: You possess a library full of old and forbidden knowledge.
- Owed a Favor: Someone very important owes you a favor. Be careful when you settle up, you might not get what you bargained for.
- Spirit Mentor: You have a spiritual companion or guide that can give you advice and knowledge.
- True Love: A source of inner strength that will never fade. It can carry you through helplessness, and hopelessness.

### ***Major Flaws***

- Alliance Enmity: The armies of the Grand Alliance know your name, and go out of their way to kill you.
- Bad Vision: No, you're not squinting because the sun is in your eye. You're a liability in combat.
- Clan Enmity: Someone in the Grin has it out for you. Watch your back.
- Color Blindness: Like a game animal, you only see in black and white, and miss crucial details.
- Coward: You are a craven, fainthearted invertebrate, controlled by your fear and doubt.
- Creepy: You frequently act in odd and/or awkward ways that other people find strange and confusing rather than endearing.
- Cursed: You killed the wrong sorcerer, and ate his death curse. It will afflict you forever.
- Dark Fate: A future of anguish and suffering awaits you. The stars and stones foretell it.
- Demonic Affinity: Whether you like it or not, the Legion has some grip on your soul.
- Deranged: You suffer from a permanent derangement, usually due to crushing psychic trauma.
- Disfigured: Combat or tragedy has left you mangled and disfigured. You are disgusting to behold.
- Hard of Hearing: Something has damaged your hearing, which makes you a risk in the field.
- Haunted: You are tortured and hounded by the spirits of your past victims.
- Hunted: Someone, or something, has devoted their lives to ending yours. Be wary.
- Legion Enmity: You have incurred the enmity of an agent of the Burning Legion.
- Missing Limb: One of your limbs got lopped off in a battle. You've never really recovered.
- Monstrous: You are an unparalleled wretch, a monstrous thing that nobody could possibly love.

- Narcissistic: You are incapable of self-criticism and believe yourself to be superior to your fellow soldiers.
- One Eye: Something took your eye. Now you have no depth perception and are ugly.
- Permanent Wound: You suffered a wound that cannot be healed. Ever. By anyone.
- Taint of Corruption: You emit a dark and unsettling aura that subconsciously drives people away.

### ***Restricted Merits and Flaws***

Some Merits and Flaws are just too powerful or damning. They don't foster normal role-play, but hinder and frustrate it. They are useful only in very extraordinarily rare circumstances, by the guild leadership, as instruments for telling stories that affect or shape the story of the entire Blacktooth Grin Clan. Even then, these sorts of Merits and Flaws are best left to the Blizzard game developers.

#### **Godlike Merits**

- Charmed Existence: Everything, just, "works out" for you. Everyone around you should probably resent you for this, but remarkably, they all seem to like you even more.
- Destiny: Long ago your coming was foretold by prophecy. You will single-handedly change the outcome of the world, and everyone will know it.
- Deus Ex Machina: You have a powerful, mysterious guardian who can swoop down out of the heavens at any moment and completely obliterate all obstacles in your path.
- Dragonflight Ties: The Aspects know you and go out of their way to help you, even though you are just a mortal and therefore like a Junebug to them.
- Immortality: Junebug, hell! You're immortal, just like the dragons and demons.
- Fame: Everyone knows who you are. Garrosh Hellscream asks you for your autograph. You're the next Lady La-La, the next Haris Pilton, the next Grom Hellscream. Truly.
- Famous Mentor: You were raised or taught by someone famous. A leader, or a powerful hero, someone with a household name, that even people who never read quest texts would recognize.
- Powerful Artifact: You possess something that could destroy all of your enemies, and elevate you to godhood. And no, you won't let anyone play with it.
- Royal Heritage: You are the scion of a royal line. You were raised in the corridors of power, frequently attend royalty-only sock hops, and have access to the treasury.

#### **Crippling Flaws**

- Blind: You have no eyes, or cannot see with them.
- Dark Destiny: You are fated to change the world for the worse. All will know and curse your name.
- Deaf: You cannot hear, and therefore cannot follow orders.

- Inept: You are generally incompetent and ineffectual, unfit for a life of war.
- Mentally Disabled: You are a mental vegetable, incapable of reason or cunning.
- Mute: You cannot speak, or have no tongue, so cannot communicate on the field.
- Slave to the Legion: Your will is not your own. You have been corrupted and dominated by a demon from the Burning Legion.
- Varelse: You are the “other”, the complete social alien, incapable of fully belonging, a monster whose values and morals are completely repugnant to those around you. They are likely to turn on you and kill you in short order.

## **Combat Trauma**

Like Merits and Flaws, Trauma is a pure RP mechanic; it is not enforced by any rules, but exists solely to expand character development and foster role-play. While Merits and Flaws are characteristics you might start the game with, a life of constant warfare in the Grin can lead to serious mental and emotional trauma for your character. Trauma attributes are characteristics you can assign to your character after having lived through (or fallen in) serious battles or engagements. Like Merits and Flaws, Trauma should not singularly define your character, but it can be used to help lend the character color and depth.

## **Recovering from Trauma**

Trauma can be recovered from in three principal ways.

1. Healed, usually over long periods of time, but more quickly if under the spiritual guidance of the Mok’gun, the clan’s spirit healers, witch doctors, guides, visionaries, and oracles. The methods of the Mok’gun are carefully guarded secrets.
2. Prevented and mitigated with the savage rites of the Gol’kosh, the clan guardians. These sacred and ancient Orcish battle rites foster a sort of mental fortitude that shields the heavy infantry of the Grin from the worst effects of battle.
3. More ominously, Trauma can be deflected, channeled, or even harvested using the dark rituals of the Lak’gora, the clan’s cabal of shadowy magical practitioners and necrolytes before and after battle.
4. Drugs, alcohol, potions, elixirs, herbs, and other substances. Usually these are not permanent fixes, but temporary relief, often with negative side effects of their own.
5. Top-secret patented Goblin technology. We’re not sure how they do it, but have you ever seen a Goblin who was depressed and morose?

Often, time and rest will heal these wounds over the course of weeks and months, but in the meantime, they can be a vehicle for compelling role-play. Sometimes, constant untreated trauma can lead the character to a crippling breakdown, and it’s something to consider

before and after battles, particularly those that do not end well. Don't load up on Trauma attributes, but don't ignore them either. They're not required or enforced by anyone, they are a tool for character development.

- Acute Distress when reminded of the event
- Avoiding activities, places, things that remind you of the event
- Emotional numbness, detachment
- Feelings of mistrust and betrayal
- Flashbacks (acting or feeling like the event is reoccurring)
- Guilt, shame, self-blame about the event
- Hyper vigilance
- Intense physical reactions when reminded of the event (pulse, breathing, nausea, tension, sweating)
- Intrusive Memories
- Irritability or angry outbursts
- Jumpy, nervous, easily startled
- Loss of interest in regular activities
- Memory loss
- Nightmares
- Sense of a limited future
- Substance abuse
- Trouble concentrating
- Trouble sleeping

## Chapter Six: Role-playing

The first and most important thing to remember about role-playing is this:

Roleplaying cannot be consumed, except by those who produce it.

You must take an active role in participating in the telling of stories in order to role-play. Do not expect that you may sit back and wait to be fed stories by us. Your guildmates are not charged with entertaining you in this manner. You cannot buy role-playing off of a shelf, unwrap it, and consume it. It requires active participation.

Role-playing cannot be taught so much as remembered. Storytelling is the oldest art that human beings possess. It predates written language, likely by tens or even hundreds of thousands of years. It is absolutely intrinsic to the human condition. It is not new, or mysterious, but second nature. It is intimately tied into our social needs, even (and perhaps more so) in the Internet era. All children do it to some extent. Role-playing is just one type of storytelling.

This chapter covers the rules and expectations that the Blacktooth Grin uphold regarding RP, and briefly touches on some techniques and suggestions for improving your role-playing.

### *The Official Rules*

1. All Grin are required to remain in character at all times in /g, /y, /e, and /s.
2. When whispering other role-players, be courteous and attempt to do it in character (IC). If you cannot, bracket your text (( like this )) to indicate out of character text (OOC), unless both parties agree that the private conversation is OOC.
3. All OOC conversations in the guild are held in the officer (/o) channel.
4. All Grin are expected to attain a Black War Wolf mount and to use it in guild PvP events.
5. All Grin are expected to acquire a Guild Tabard and wear it during all guild events.

### *Hierarchy of RP Sins*

The following RP faux pas, listed in order of worst to least, will rouse the animosity of your guildmates, and other role-players. Do not do these things. You will be disciplined, and potentially asked to leave the guild if they become a problem.

1. Unwelcome or public ERP: Erotic Role-play, or “ERP”, is not in itself a crime. However, when ERP is not consensual, it is sexual harassment. If you are asked to stop it, you are required to do so immediately, and expected to harbor no grudge

over the issue. Public ERP, even if consensual, is distasteful, and potentially violates the terms of service for the game. Unwanted and repeated harassment of guildmates will be dealt with harshly.

2. God mode, or “godmoding”: Never, ever attempt to role-play another person’s character unless you have a game mechanic to back it up. If you want to control every character in a story, go write a book and get it out of your system. You have absolutely no authority over the motivations, internal thoughts, reactions, origins, or destiny of any character but your own.

Examples include:

- a. “I remove my hood and you stare at my perfect elven features in awe and wonder.” No, none of us care about your elven face. My Orc is only attracted to a female’s tusks and the length of her topknot. Don’t tell me how I feel unless you hit me with a magical effect or drugged me.
  - b. “Rentwag deserted the clan, so we hunted him down and fed his corpse to our mounts, binding his soul to a fragment of the Dark Portal.” No, he joined the Thunderhoof Clan, and is alive and well. You have no authority to dictate the story of another person’s character.
3. Omniscient or Verbose Narrator: Your RP is constant. Every single emotional state is broadcast in /e. You subject everyone around you to an unfiltered stream of your character’s inner mental state. Everyday actions, such the use of your spells, the preparation of food, mounting and dismounting from your horse, are described with paragraph after soul-numbing paragraph of endless walls of text. This reduces the signal to noise ratio for everyone around you to infinitesimally small levels, and is not appreciated. Try to develop a gift for understatement and brevity, and never broadcast your inner mental state to the world, as through an omniscient narrator. Emotions are worn on the face and in one’s stance, in gestures. Let us infer your mental state from simple gestures and brief facial expressions.
  4. Unwelcome Combat RP: Members of Orcish societies don’t jump out of the shadows and start burying daggers in one another’s backs out of boredom. If you want to have an RP fight, arrange it beforehand through a duel or a /roll game in /p that is broadcast to /g consensually. Unprovoked lethal aggression in /g can have severe RP repercussions (see: Clan Discipline and Punishment)
  5. ((Outofcharacteritis)): Wrapping every sentence in /g, /s, or /y in (( out of character brackets )) is not role-playing. It is not a substitute for role-playing. Bracketing is tolerated, but not welcome, because it is distracting, and should be used very, very sparingly. If you want to have a long OOC conversation with someone, do it in party chat, or open up a new chat channel with them. Constantly talking publicly out of character breaks immersion for other role-players.

## *On Grothood*

Your first role in the Blacktooth Grin will be as a grot. Grots are often described in-character as “worms” or “worg food”, but they play an important role in the guild ecosystem. The purpose of Grothood is twofold. First, with respect to new members, Grothood provides a role in the guild culture whose primary responsibilities are to listen, learn, follow orders, and strive to develop and perfect themselves. Grots are not full members of the guild, with all of the rights and obligations that full membership confers. Grothood for new members is a trial period, wherein the members and officers get to know a person and decide if they want to bring this new person into the guild.

Grot culture has grown over the years into a vital and even enjoyable part of guild RP. Grots, for example, are forbidden from entering the buildings in Stonard, and are forced to sleep outdoors in “grot holes”, which double as makeshift graves in case the grot dies during combat. Grots are required to dig their grot-holes with their bare hands, except for one grot, who possesses the infamous and coveted “Grot Shovel.” The Grot Shovel is a status symbol among the grots of the clan, and can only be won through trial by combat. Rumors are, there was once a particularly well known member of their ranks who became the “King of the Grots” for a time, speaking on their behalf to the rest of the clan, and the Grot Shovel was his scepter. Formally, the elders of the clan do not distinguish between the grots, but among themselves, grots have a rich and humorous internal culture.

Grots are also treated with special cruelty by some of the Grunts of the clan. A grot who misbehaves during combat might find himself running patrols without armor, or lashed for his or her insolence with a flame-enchanted dark iron chain whip. Grots undergo a ritual upon earning their Black War Wolf, the official clan mount, wherein they carve up their former mount and offer it as a feast to the rest of the clan.

This ritual is one of prestige for grots, and usually comes very near their graduation into the full-blooded ranks of the clan.

Not all players of grots are new to the guild, though. Grothood also offers a chance for existing members to bring under geared, or lowbie alts into the guild, allowing them to focus on leveling and gearing a character for endgame content. With respect to RP, there is no difference between a new grot player and an alt grot--both are expected to follow orders, use common sense, and advance toward the endgame.

Some rare exceptions to this general rule include banking alts, or low level crafters.

Regardless of whether your grot is new to the Grin or is an alt, you are expected at all times to behave as a Grunt. Disciplined, attentive, skillful in combat, respectful of others both inside and outside of the guild, respectful of role-players (within reason), in attendance for our world PvP raids and other events, and always displaying a willingness and enthusiasm to improve and to help your guildmates.

In order to graduate from Grothood and become a full member of the Blacktooth Grin clan, you must demonstrate the following things to the officers:

1. Frequent RP-PvP raid participation, demonstrating discipline and sound judgment in raids and other PvP events.
2. Meet the minimum physical requirements for promotion to Grunt (Level 85, 1500 resilience as of January 2011, these requirements are subject to change over time)
3. Possession of a Black War Wolf mount.
4. Willingness to role-play and to learn the lore and history of the game setting, particularly with respect to the contents of this player's guide.
5. Show "positive character".
  - a. BE OF GOOD CHEER.
  - b. Admit and correct your mistakes.
  - c. Demonstrate respect and consideration for others.
  - d. Honor your commitments.
  - e. Be honest and sincere with your guildmates.
  - f. Display good sportsmanship to our opponents.
  - g. Defend those who are weaker than you.
  - h. Show initiative, leadership, and willingness to accept responsibility.
  - i. Pursue excellence.
  - j. Educate yourself about the game mechanics, terrain, lore, and other things that will help the guild achieve victory.
  - k. Be decisive in combat.
  - l. Foster the advancement of your peers.
6. Do not be a source of drama and conflict. Do not burden the officers with constant whispers about various issues--they don't need extra drama, and also want to just enjoy the game from time to time. Try not to be too "needy", "greedy" or "leety".

We're less interested in "forcing" or "training" players to learn how to act like Grunts. We're more interested in finding players who are already like us. Grots who consistently fail to meet the above qualifications for full membership will be removed from the guild. Grots who act like Grunts will be hit in the face with a hammer and welcomed as full members of the Blacktooth Grin Clan.

## **Roleplaying Status: Low to High**

The Blacktooth Grin win or lose based on the iron discipline of their soldiers during combat. Discipline among the ranks is the core virtue of the soldier in the Grin. This means that all Grin are deferential to superiors when in the field. Off the field, members of the Clan are friendly and jovial. But Grin listen and respond to orders during combat situations and official muster without question, even if they believe those orders to be in error. Out of character critical comments and tactical suggestions are best left to In-character post-raid debriefing sessions, and training periods between major battles. They have no place in /raid, /o, or /w during combat engagements. During raid engagements, Grin do not talk in /s, or /e unless told by a superior to do so. This includes saluting.

Ad-hoc status, such as squadron or raid leadership, is treated like guild rank during encounters. The Raid or Battleground leader is to be treated like a superior officer until the combat event ends.

However, Grin don't kiss ass either. They come from a proud tradition. They follow orders because they're orders, not to curry favor. If the orders are bad, but well executed, the failure belongs to the raid leader or officer, not to the soldier. If the orders are not followed, then it's impossible to know whether they were good or not. Even between equals in the ranks of Grunts and grots, iron discipline is harshly reinforced. It is the cardinal virtue of all Blacktooth Grin.

If a grot acts like a sycophantic toad, they might be perceived as weak or scheming. This might be the nature of your character. If that is the case, take careful steps to distinguish between your character's sycophantic nature and your own traits as a player, namely by not being a sycophantic toad while out-of-character. Conversely, if a grot acts with disregard to their superiors, they may invite punishment upon themselves. It's a fine dance between weakness and foolish overconfidence.

## **Roleplaying Status: High to Low**

Back in camp, grots are often subjected to many forms of hazing and ritual abuse. For example, when they first attain their Black War Wolf, a ritual feast is made of their former mount. "Grin don't ride food animals" is the mantra. Grots are not permitted to enter buildings, and made to sleep outdoors in "grot holes" which they must dig using the "grot shovel". Hazing of grots is more than a fun tradition, though.

It tests the character of the grot, and instills a sense of duty and respect for tradition. There is a fine line, then, between appropriate in-character grot hazing, and inappropriate out-of-character assattery and bullying. The officers encourage the former and have zero tolerance for the latter.

Grunts are to be treated with respect by their superiors, and with the assumption that they are disciplined, superior soldiers who can be trusted to execute their orders.

## ***Clan Discipline and Punishment***

Due to the culture of iron discipline, the Blacktooth Grin rarely if ever need to make a spectacle in punishing their members. Grots are subjected to a variety of harmlessly annoying humiliations in order to encourage them to seek promotion. Mouthing off during muster might earn a Grinmate the privilege of leading a patrol into alliance territory without their armor. Players who repeatedly abuse their guild chat privileges or mistreat their guildmates in /g or /o will be cut off from these channels. Grots who refuse orders, behave insubordinately during world PvP raids or act disruptively during RP events might find themselves removed from the raid and cut off from the healers in the middle of a battle, or not chosen for battleground and arena events. Repeated violations of this nature will result in one or two private warnings and the misbehavior does not improve, the player will be dismissed.

Players who are devoted, disciplined, iron-clad members with long history of good standings who choose to RP an insubordinate character might be disciplined in character during RP events. They are, however, encouraged to RP better behavior after this. Passive aggressive misbehavior under the guise of RP will be dealt with accordingly.

## **Chapter Seven: Clan Groups and Subcultures**

The Blacktooth Grin is a very large and very old clan. It has its traditions, some of which are as old as The Venture Co. itself. But, because it is so large, it naturally has internal “organs”, groups of characters with similar interests who vie for power and honor within its ranks.

### ***Grots***

Before being formally accepted into the Blacktooth Grin Clan, inductees must serve as grots, which roughly translated, means “worg food”. Grothood is a blast furnace that either burns off imperfections or breaks the inductee entirely. It is during this period that a grot is expected to learn discipline and what it means to be Grin. Every member of the Blacktooth Grin served first as a grot, excluding the enigmatic undead priest Rue.

Over the years the ranks of grots have waxed and waned, and their ranks have developed a surprisingly rich internal culture. These range from well-known traditions such as the endless war over who controls the mighty Grot Shovel, to whispered rumors such as the one-time existence of a “King of the Grots” who defended them and spoke on their behalf to the rest of the Clan. Grots have been sent to fight in Stormwind unarmed and without armor, as well as used as distractions for Alliance forces. These indignities are done in order to ensure that a grot is loyal and gain respect from clan members who have given their tooth to the Grin.

Ultimately, all Grothood ends. Either they desert, scattering to the winds, or they get hit so hard in the face with a hammer, that they become Grunts.

### ***The Oathsworn***

The Blacktooth Grin Rogue Squad has a reputation for being one of the most elite rogue units in existence. Members of the Alliance have come to fear the sight of a rogue wearing the clan’s colors, because they know that if they can see a member of the Rogue Squad, they’re already dead. While not all Grin rogues are in the Squad, they are encouraged to train and take part in Squad exercises until they are skilled enough to join.

The rogue squad has been commanded by a variety of infamous Grin members, such as Bellmont, the Jak twins and the Goblin Reconnaissance and Enemy Elimination Division (or G.R.E.E.D). While each of these members brought their own style and leadership to the rogue squad, they all were connected as members of the secret society of Oathsworn.

The oathsworn have set aside their own honor, sacrificed any chance for glory for themselves, for the betterment of their clan. They are sworn to their Chieftain, and no others within the Clan know of this group or their work. They are the hidden weapon of the Chieftain himself, and answer only to his will.

Founded by Gorfrunch Smashblade to protect the ideals of the reformed Blacktooth Grin at

all costs, The Shrouded Blade functions both defensively and offensively, eliminating key threats before battles become necessary, while also countering the assassins and spies of their enemies. Members of this cabal, known as "Oathsworn" often hold prominent posts publicly within the clan, but are subject to the strict hierarchy of the cabal when operating as a part of its operations.

### ***The Gol'kosh***

The Gol'kosh are the oathbound guardians of the clan, the hardened elite core of the formidable Grin army. The Gol'kosh do not fit into the official rank structure of the Blacktooth Grin as even a grot may be deemed fit and loyal enough to join, as unlikely as that may be. They are often the first soldiers on the battlefield and the last to leave, securing both the approach and, if necessary, the retreat of the Grin column. They relish tactical combat and are able to execute complex maneuvers at the behest of the Warchief.

The central ideals which make up the Gol'kosh philosophy are loyalty, discipline, and the inner power of every individual. It is their strict adherence to these principles that make them a force to be feared. Upon induction into the Gol'kosh, a grunt must go through the Ritual of Naming in which they are branded with the name they have earned on the battlefield in the form of a facial tattoo of the orcish runes. The Gol'kosh as a whole forsake their individuality and share the same uniform and weaponry. Every facet of the Gol'kosh is done in uniform and the uniform is recognized by the Alliance as a signature mark of the Grin elite forces. During times of peace, the Gol'kosh serve as the sentinels and bodyguards of the clan dignitaries, enforcing laws and remaining vigilant against outside threats. The Gol'kosh are chosen by the Warchief and serve at his pleasure.

### ***The Mok'gun***

The Mok'gun are tasked with bringing together the differing views of the Grin's spiritual leadership. This spiritual sect was founded by the troll priestess Zinda and has been loosely affiliated with clan members. The Mok'gun are less like a sect and more like a religious order. They are dedicated not only to guiding the Grin spiritually, serving as councilors and advisors, but also to mending the Grin physically. Although healers tend to unite as these councilors, it is not a requirement to be able to heal in order to follow the tenants of the Mok'gun. Those who follow the Mok'gun care more about the state of the clan as a whole. Whether they have the supplies needed to succeed in battle and whether they are practicing a healthy lifestyle.

While the Grin are renowned as a warrior society, all wars are won on the backs of healers. The Mok'gun is a small and dedicated group who cherish their role as a support unit to the Blacktooth Grin war machine. It is truly the Mok'gun who have made the Blacktooth Grin one of the most dominant forces on the server.

### ***The Lak'gora***

The pursuit of power in all its forms, no matter the cost, is the driving force behind the Lak'gora. Like Gul'dan, the Lak'gora believe that no price is too great for an upper hand on the enemy, and they employ any tactics necessary to ensure they get that advantage. Intrigue, subterfuge, and the darkest of magic are all tools that the Lak'gora keep at their disposal.

Founded by the traitorous warlock, Bok'theg, this group operates under the teachings of the Shadow Council. Not all members of the Lak'gora have enmity towards the Grin, even Bok'theg was willing to die for the clan. However, the Lak'gora do not always believe the official channels will accomplish the desired goals of the Grin. Oftentimes, when the Grin has sought to avoid conflict and focus inward, it is the Lak'gora that guide the clan back to its warlike nature.

Very little is known about the rituals and activities of the Lak'gora. The Warchief tolerates their presence in the clan as the Lak'gora have often provided innovative strategies to the battlefield that have led to victories against all odds. They have also proven useful in furthering the unsavory tasks of the warchief, that are best kept secret from the Grin at large. The Lak'gora's track record of results keeps them a valuable asset in the clan, although their numbers at any given time may vary.

### ***Continental Demolitions, Incorporated***

Due to new budgeting policies pushed by Bilgewater Cartel advisors in Orgrimmar, registered military entities within the horde forces can receive, with the proper paperwork, fully subsidized funding to contract goblin companies and individuals as a part of the war effort.

Following the Northern Wars, the Blacktooth Grin has been restored to good standing in the Horde and now qualifies as such an entity. As such, they have contracted Continental Demolitions, Inc., or CDI as it is generally abbreviated, a Goblin firm specializing in munitions, artillery, and tactical technology. CDI first made contact with the Grin in Northrend, hired on as engineers to build Conquest Hold up to the Grin's specifications. Following the Cataclysm, CDI oversaw the development of G.R.E.E.D. and the hiring of Bilgewater Cartel staff.

Grand Taskmaster Krozlowe Fitzsprocket (that's Mr. Fitzsprocket to you) is the CEO and leader. With the recent appointment of Vol'jin as Warchief of the Horde, the Grin is currently in contract negotiations with the Grand Taskmaster.

### ***The Spiritblade Clan***

The Spiritblade Clan is an ancient sect of Necrolytes that survived Gul'dan's purge during the First War. In previous times, the Necrolytes had been a peaceful branch of shamanism dedicated to assisting the spirits of the dead in transit to the afterworld. Hunted down to near extinction, the Spiritblade clan has turned to far darker magic and has become

connected to the spirit realm. Not officially joined with the Grin, their membership, numbers, and bases of operations are currently unknown to the Grin at large. The chieftain of the Spiritblade clan has never been named and only communicates with the Grin through representatives. The longest lasting representative of the Spiritblade clan was Virroth.

What is known about the Spiritblade is that they had a hand in the Smashblade's return to the world of the living after his demise at the battle of Wildhammer Stronghold. Their rituals surround themselves with the skulls of their elders summoning the wisdom of their ancestors from the spirit realm. Each warrior of the Spiritblade is nameless and only seeks to act as a future vessel for souls deemed powerful enough to return as Death Knights. These vessels are created using ritualistic Kris's to collect enough souls of the fallen to successfully raise the dead.

Within the Grin, the Spiritblade Virroth has been given a position of high authority by the Chieftain despite his relatively short tenure. To the shamans that have studied the old ways, Virroth's practices seem bloodthirsty and dangerous. Virroth has since left the Grin to return to his clan deep in the Deadwind Pass, but the Warchief remains capable of calling forth the Spiritblade, should he ever require their aid. In previous times, the Necrolytes had been a peaceful branch of shamanism dedicated to assisting the spirits of the dead in transit to the afterworld.

### ***Rumored Others***

There are rumors of another shadowy cabal of orcs in the southern swamps with ties in all of the other groups in the Blacktooth Grin. It is said the clan seeks access to the gray roads that separate the world of the living from that of the dead. Emissaries of various light and shadow cults from the North have been sent to Stonard to confirm these rumors.

### ***Military Structure and Clan Ranks***

- Grot - Weak, untrained, or young, these are the meat shields of the clan.
- Grunt - Battle hardened soldiers, the iron spine of the Grin's military. These are the soldiers who've been asked to give a tooth to the Warchief, as a gesture of loyalty. Grunts are the most integral part of the Grin army and as such are held to a high standard of discipline, skill, and conduct.
- Raider - The most ferocious and cunning of all the Grunts, Raiders are chosen every month in a ritual trial called "Jak'thra", and losers are sent back to the ranks of Grunts.
- Enforcer - Officer alt rank, trusted lieutenants of the Sythegars who have the authority to enforce the Clan's laws.
- Sythegar - Officers and leaders of the Clan
- Champion - Former Sythegar and Chieftains, and the honored few whose names will live on forever in the history of the Grin.
- Chieftain - Gorfrunch Smashblade, who rebuilt the Grin from Rend's folly.

## **Summary**

The tools offered in this guide are not meant to be conclusive, but illustrative of the internal culture and long history of the Blacktooth Grin clan on The Venture Co (US) realm. You will almost certainly wish to expand upon the themes covered in these pages, and are encouraged to do so. Future editions of this text will hopefully include corrections, elaborations, and feedback from members new and old, as they help us continue to shape and forge the lore of our realm.