



From Across the Steppes...

Background and rules for Kislev Ranger Hired Swords by Nick Kyme

The body was still warm as Kessandria crouched within the dense foliage, her fingers searching the victim's neck for a pulse.

He was dead. All the while she kept her eyes on the forest, scrutinizing the arboreal gloom stretching before her and listening intently to the silence.

The bear had killed six people so far that she knew of. The memory of the slaughtered family still lingered, the walls of their tiny hovel sprayed red, five bodies torn and rent beyond recognition. This trapper made six. Never in her experience as a ranger had she heard of bears attacking a settlement; oft their prey were lone travellers or ambitious hunters. But she was far from the grassy steppes of Kislev now, deep in the grim heart of the Empire, a land besieged from within in dark and uncertain times.

"Anything?" a voice said behind her.

Kessandria raised her hand open palmed, gesturing for silence.

Booted feet crunched upon dried bracken to her left and ahead.

She muttered a curse and, rising, turned to fix three men behind her with an icy stare as cold as that from the Tzarina herself.

"Keep quiet," she hissed, "you want this beast to be upon us?" she added, her accent thick.

The mercenaries, unkempt even in their finely tailored attire regarded her with mild contempt and tramped

forward through the forest with all the grace and subterfuge of rampaging cattle.

"Sigmar's holy oath!" Reingaer, the captain, swore regarding, the corpse at Kessandria's feet. "It did that?"

He swallowed abruptly, a sword point at his neck.

Kessandria stared at him down the steel edge as she might some filth on her boot.

There was a flash of silver and two blades were quickly at her throat, Reingaer's comrades, a surly, one-eyed swordsman, and an unshaven bruiser, looking at her with malicious intent.

"He is close," she breathed, chest rising and falling rapidly as the cold steel bit at her skin. She lowered her sword.

There was a disturbance ahead as Reingaer's men continue to plough, heedless of Kessandria's warnings.

"Listen to me," he told her with day old alcohol breath, "you were hired to track that thing for us. If we're close then you've done your job and you'll be paid." He leaned in closer, making no disguise as he breathed in her scent, "The bounty for that creature is mine, understand?"

Slowly Kessandria nodded, all the time aware of Reingaer's men ruining her stealth.

His men lowered their blades as she sheathed hers.

"Know this," she told him, "I have never seen von like zis. Bears, zey kill for food, or if cornered, not in malice, or for pleasure."





For a moment, she thought she'd got through. A cry interrupted the tension.

"Here, this way, there are tracks!"

Kessandria turned to see a gleeful warrior bail his comrades. He was ahead of her and as she turned, there was a look of bloodlust in his eyes. That look turned to horror as a massive black shape seemed to appear out of the shadows before him.

He grasped the hilt of his sword, but did not unsheathe it, claws like knives cutting his flesh like paper; his face, neck and torso a red ruin.

Another man close by, cried out and fled in terror. The bellish bear pounded after him, crushing branch and foliage in its path and brought him down in a moment, tearing at his back as it wrenched off a limb.

A third warrior mustered his courage and ran forward. There was a loud clang of metal and he screamed, pinned in place by a rusty bear trap, left long ago to ensnare the fiend. As he struggled at the iron manacle slowing severing his ankle, the bear lumbered over to him and with a mighty swipe of a paw the size of a warhammer, took off his head. Arterial spray fountained up into the forest canopy and two men nearby abandoned their weapons and fled.

Reingaer was paralysed with fear as the monstrous apparition came towards them.

Kessandria went down to one knee; nocked an arrow into her bow and let fly. It was a good shot, the arrowhead lodged in the bear's thigh. It roared in pain and redoubled its efforts to reach them.

The roar jolted Reingaer to his senses, and raising his sword, cried, "Charge!"

Two mercenaries with long spears ran in, thrusting at the beast as it clawed the air around them. It lodged its massive jaw around a spear haft and dragged its bearer

close, heaving madly as he tried to pull back. The bear smashed him to pulp with its fists. The second spearman pierced its side and the bear whirled around, charging him into a tree, breaking his neck and spine.

There was only Reingaer and his two cronies left.

They ran in, even as Kessandria let fly another arrow which thudded into the bear.

She watched as the one-eyed mercenary rammed his blade, two-handed, into the beast's chest. Something glowed there, dully, then flared as the creature roared again, tearing three bloody gashes down the warrior's chest and face. He fell to the ground and lay still. Even Kruger, a hefty giant of a man, was dwarfed by the bear. He backed down at it with his sword desperately. It now bled from a dozen wounds, but did not fall. Instead it rammed a heavy paw onto Kruger's chest, pushing him down hard into the ground, his breaking ribs an audible 'crack' above the screaming.

Reingaer was the last and, at the final moment, his nerve abandoned him and he cowered before the monster as it loomed above him, all but eclipsed by its shadow. He whimpered like a babe, sword hanging limply at his side. The bear took hold of him and crushed him to its body. The strangled cries lasted only a moment.

It threw Reingaer's tangled corpse down and looked at Kessandria.

She saw rage in its eyes and hate.

Kessandria nocked another arrow and aimed carefully. She would only get one chance.

The beast roared its fury at her and charged.

It was only a few feet away when Kessandria released the arrow and dove headlong to the side, the bear's mighty bulk taking it past her and into a hefty tree trunk which smashed apart on impact.

Calm descended and silence returned.

Only Kessandria's pounding heart seemed to make any sound.

Dazed and cut, she rose cautiously from the leaf clutter.

The bear lay still.

She moved over to it. It had twisted in the impact and was on its back. It was dead. She searched the fur of its chest with her sword.

There. She thrust deep and yanked out a glowing shard that had been embedded in the creature's skin.

Tentatively she bent down, picking it up and held it before her.

"Wyrdstone," she gasped.

"My thanks to you captain Reingaer," she told the corpse, "I couldn't have done it, without you."

She had one last look at the shard and placed it carefully in a pouch and beaded north, towards the settlement where grateful villagers awaited, and smiled.

"It seems I shall collect more than just the bounty."



Kislev Rangers In Nordheim

Kislev is a wild and untamed land; a place of endless horizons, rocky steppes and icy tundra, its plains stretch as far as the eye can see. It is here that the rangers are in their element. Capable of great endurance, travelling on foot for days at a time, they negotiate this hostile land, patrolling its borders, ever watchful for dark forces.

Kislev lies deep in the heart of the icy north and many of its towns and cities are not far from the dreaded Chaos Wastes. Many times have rangers been the first to encounter such abominations as they wander mindlessly across the lands, savagely attacking any they find.

Kislev Rangers have much experience fighting such creatures and are adept at felling large monsters from distance with their preferred weapon – the bow. With hawk-like vision and blade keen instincts, many foul beasts have been slain by a ranger's arrow, the sleeping civilians unaware of the danger at their very doorstep. They are also good swordsmen, like most Kislevites, taught to fight and ride at a young age. It is the way of the ranger to travel light, and they seldom wear much armour or carry weighty packs or provisions. They must be at one with their environment and live off what the land provides. A bow, sword and a cloak to ward off the worst of the weather is oft all a ranger carries on their travels.

Although they are capable warriors, the true strength of a ranger lies in the ability to track. Having travelled the

length and breadth of Kislev and beyond, these rangers are excellent scouts and guides, and many warbands and generals hire them for just this purpose. Many times, has it been, when a ranger's warning has averted an ambush or found a clear route through perilous conditions.

Such skill is in great demand, and many rangers have travelled further afield than their native lands, some journeying down into the Empire in search of fortune and glory there. In these dark times of three Emperors, there is much civil unrest within the Empire as brother turns against brother. Deadly plots and ambushes are rife. With a ranger to guide you, ambushes can be avoided, and safe paths forged. Such a guide can ask a high price indeed. Some rangers have also been known to tout their skills to Lords and Barons for hunting down the wolves and Beastmen that plague the many forests, succeeding alone, where scores of armed men failed.

As Mordheim, the City of the Damned draws sell-swords and fortune-hunters from across the Old World it is no surprise to find Kislevite Rangers there too. Adept at exploring through the ruins, finding forgotten loot or lending their deadly aim to a captain's ambition, warbands frequently hire these wild warriors.

Perhaps most peculiar of all, is that many of the rangers are women. Most of the men folk of the northern lands are committed to its protection from the ravaging armies of the Kurgan marauder hordes and the other servants of





"Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide babe..."

Chaos. It is the women then, often those shunned by their families or banished for some misdeed, that range out from their homes, perhaps hoping to redeem themselves or even make their own fortunes in the perilous lands beyond.

Whether man or woman though, all rangers are possessed of the same demeanour. Living alone for such long periods, with self-sufficiency as their creed, rangers are reclusive and saturnine. At heart they are loners, particularly so with Kislevites, whose strong culture makes them feel alien despite their wanderlust.

Kislev Ranger

30 gold crowns to hire + 15 gold crowns upkeep

Profile	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
	4	3	4	3	3	1	4	1	7

May be Hired: Mercenaries, Witch Hunters and Dwarfs may hire Kislev Rangers.

Rating: A Kislev Ranger increases the warband's rating by +15 points plus 1 point for each Experience Point she has.

Equipment: Bow, sword and Hunter's cloak.

Skills: A Kislev Ranger may choose from the Shooting and Speed skills whenever she gains a new skill. In addition there are several skills unique to Kislev Rangers as detailed below, which she can choose instead of normal skills. Note that these skills can only be acquired through experience. They are not possessed by a new recruit.

SPECIAL RULES

Heart strike. Kislev Rangers often battle against large monsters that roam their native borders. They have grown particular adept at felling such beasts with a single, deadly arrow strike. When shooting at a large monster (this includes large animals such as bears too), if the Kislev Ranger rolls a 6 to hit, followed by a wound roll of 5+ the beast is shot in some vital spot and killed instantly, regardless of wounds, with no save whatsoever.

Hunter's cloak. This cloak is fashioned by Kislevites and is only worn by their rangers. A hidden ranger will not reveal her position by shooting. The target model can take an Initiative test in order to try and spot the firing ranger. If the test is successful, the ranger is no longer hidden.

Seeker. When rolling on the Exploration chart, the Kislev Ranger allows you to modify one dice by +1/-1.

Loner. As they are notoriously reclusive, Kislev Rangers never have to take All Alone tests.

KISLEV SKILLS

Animal Call: If hidden, the Kislev Ranger may use animal calls to confuse and confound his enemies. Any model within 18" can be affected and, if not able to charge that turn, must take a Leadership test before moving. If they fail the Kislev Ranger may move the model in any direction she wishes.

Herb Lore: Out in the wilds, the ranger has learned basic herb lore to cure simple injuries. Any model in base-to-base contact with the ranger may be healed at the start of the Recovery phase. On a roll of 4+ the model has 1 wound restored. The ranger may not move in the same turn as she uses this skill, but may use it to heal herself.





Scenario: Wolf Hunt!

A warband led by a ranger has ventured into one of the dark forests of the land at the bidding of a baron wishing to rid it of a growing pack of wolves. Should the creatures be allowed to go on unchecked, they will grow bolder, attacking people instead of livestock and the baron's lands and titles would be in jeopardy. However, not convinced that a single band could accomplish this feat, the baron has hired a second group of warriors, in the secret hope that they will slay all the wolves and each other in the process...

Terrain

The battle is fought in dense woodland and the majority of the terrain should be woods, although there might also be thick bracken, a shallow stream, clustered rocks, foliage or even a small cave, which could be the wolves' lair. The vast amount of the board will be covered by trees, but there should be areas of open ground so that warriors don't get bogged down in difficult ground. Within these restrictions, each player should take it in turns to place a piece of terrain within an area roughly 4' x 4'.

Special rules

Wolves: The wolves are bold in their lair and prowl around with arrogance. There are D6+2 wolves on the board at the start of the game. At the start of the game, but before the warbands are deployed, each player takes it in turn to place a wolf (rolling a D6 to see who places first) but may place them no closer than 12" to any table edge and within 6" of another wolf (they are pack animals after all). Use wolves from the Warhammer miniatures range to represent them.

Wolves have the following profile:

Wolf									
M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
9	3	0	3	3	1	4	1	4	-

The wolves are already in their lair, so do not take Rout tests.

Wolves are adept at moving through terrain at speed, they treat all difficult ground as open ground and very difficult ground as difficult ground (but may not move through impassable terrain).

Wolves are not large or particularly powerful creatures. Do not roll on the Injury table for them. Any wolf reduced to 0 wounds is automatically out of action.

Lure of the wild: As the battle rages, other wild creatures will be drawn into the fight. At the end of each 'wolf' turn (see below), roll a D6. On a roll of 1, D6 more wolves enter the fray, from a randomly determined table edge (roll a D6 and ignore rolls of 5 or 6). If the number of wolves is a 1, then a bear has turned up instead.

Bear: Bears are covered in the Kislevite warband rules (see p.81 Mordheim Annual). As they are not goaded into battle by a Bear Tamer they are subject to the rules for stupidity. If they pass their Stupidity test then they will move and attack as per the rules for wolves given later.

Bear									
M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
6	3	0	5	5	2	2	2	6	-

Weapons and Armour: None, other than their claws and teeth!

SPECIAL RULES

Fearsome: A charging bear is a very scary sight indeed! A Trained Bear causes *fear*.

Bear Hug: If the Bear hits the same enemy warrior with both of his attacks in the same round of combat, the player may choose to make a single 'Bear Hug' attack instead of resolving the attacks normally. If this option is chosen, each player must roll a D6 and add his model's Strength to the roll. If the Bear's total is higher or the totals are equal, the opposing warrior takes a single automatic wound with no Armour Save allowed. If the enemy warrior's total is higher, the warrior has broken the Bear's hold and suffers no damage from the attack.

Animal: Trained Bears are animals and do not gain Experience.





The wolf-pack attacks



Ranger: Each warband has enlisted the aid of a ranger to locate the wolves' lair in the forest. This is either an Elf or Kislef Ranger, at the player's choosing. They will fight for free for this battle, but if the warbands want to retain their services they must pay the full hire fee and upkeep thereafter as normal.

Warbands

Both players roll a D6 to see who deploys first. Whoever rolls highest, sets up first and moves his models on in his Movement phase from the table edge of his choice. His turn continues and then the other player moves his warband on from the opposite table edge in his Movement phase.

Note that this roll will also determine who goes first. Once both players have taken a turn the wolves may then take a turn. A wolf will charge the nearest model is able, randomly determining its prey if two targets are equidistant. Any wolf that cannot charge must roll a D6 to determine its actions.

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|-----|---|
| 1-2 | The wolf moves towards the nearest enemy model in the warband that went first. |
| 3-4 | The wolf moves towards the nearest enemy model in the warband that went second. |
| 5-6 | The wolf remains still and growls menacingly. |

Ending the game

The game ends when one warband fails its Rout test. The routers automatically lose.

Experience

+1 Survives: If a Hero or Henchman group survives the battle they gain +1 Experience.

+1 Winning Leader: The leader of the winning warband gains +1 extra Experience.

+1 Bear Slayer: Any Hero earns +1 Experience point for each bear he puts out of action.

+1 Per Enemy Out of Action: Any Hero earns +1 Experience for each enemy he puts out of action (this also counts for Outriders too).

Reward

The baron, much to his chagrin, will reward any warband a bounty of 10 gold crowns for each slain wolf (the warband leader presents him with an ear, fang, pelt or some other trophy as proof). There is no reward whatsoever for slaying a bear (after all that wasn't part of the deal!).

Author

You can see Nick's work every month in the UK edition of *White Dwarf*. Looking at the latest issue I have to hand it says Nick has been painting Dwarfs and Empire for *Storm of Chaos*. What about Mordheim, eh Nick?



Further Information

This release and all current Mordheim products can be purchased from GW direct (See the How to Order pages).

Website

www.Mordheim.com

