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## THE ANTHOLOGY



EDITED BY CHRISTIAN DUNN

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# GOTREK AND FELIX: THE ANTHOLOGY

## Edited by Christian Dunn

Gotrek and Felix: unsung heroes of the Empire, or nothing more than common thieves and murderers? The truth perhaps lies somewhere in between, and depends entirely upon whom you ask... Within these pages you will find the untold tales of the adventuring duo, some of which undoubtedly even they would rather remain a secret. From the wastelands of the north to the mystical cities of Araby, and from the orcs of Karak Azgal to the ogres of Skabrand – their exploits are recalled and their legend grows. Featuring the brand new novella-length tale *Slayer's Honour* by Nathan Long, this anthology also contains a swashbuckling selection of great stories including a previously unpublished tale by renowned SF writer John Brunner.

*Gotrek and Felix: The Anthology* can be purchased direct from this website and GW mail order, Games Workshop and other hobby stores, and better bookstores.

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‘CLEAR THE BRIDGE!’ roared Gotrek. ‘Get off now!’

The gun crews scrambled to comply, but half were still busy under the span, weakening the under-structure, and those on top did not abandon them. They hurried to the ropes and heaved mightily to pull their brothers up. Migrunsson fell in with the rest, holding down a hand to haul a gunner over the rail and then pulling at another rope.

Gotrek, Agnar and Felix started forward to help, but before they had taken a step, the singing of the rails rose in volume and a clattering rumble added to it. The whole chasm shook with the noise.

Felix looked up at the twisted ends of the rail-line. Dust was shivering from them and they twitched like insect antenna. The rumble became a roar, drowning out the hoarse cries of the dwarfs, and then, as if the cliff face had vomited a string of iron sausages, a long train of mine-carts shot out of the tunnel mouth and arched down in freefall, straight at the bridge.

Felix watched in horror as the carts, all filled to the brim with rocks and boulders, crashed down amongst the scattering dwarfs and punched through the bridge like a massive cannon ball, smashing it in two. Half the dwarfs fell instantly, dropping away with the shattered stones, or dragged over the edge as the carts snagged their ropes. The others scabbled to get clear, but they had done their sabotage too well.

With the centre of the span gone, and the rest of the supports weakened, the remains of the bridge could not stand. As the dwarfs crawled for the ends or climbed their ropes, the stones fell out from under them, toppling after the broken centre like sand running out of an hourglass. The gunners, the cannon crews, and Migrunsson too, trying even to the last to push the others to safety, plummeted away towards the glowing red line, ropes and harnesses trailing after them, their howls of rage rising on the hot wind.

Gotrek stood at the broken end of the span, ten paces out from the wall of the chasm, clutching the railing with one hand, and gripping Agnar by the wrist with the other. The old Slayer was dangling over the abyss, his face as grey as river clay.

Gotrek gave him a nasty grin. ‘Should I let you go, Agnar Arvastsson? I wouldn’t want to rob you of a doom.’

‘Pull me up, curse you,’ rasped Agnar. ‘You know falling is not a proper Slayer’s death!’

Gotrek hauled Agnar up and dropped him on the broken flagstones beside him. The old Slayer grunted and pushed himself to his feet.

Henrik stepped forward to help him. ‘Maybe Gurnisson’s forgotten what a proper Slayer’s death is,’ he sneered. ‘After all, he’s been ten years searching for one.’

Gotrek’s brow lowered and he balled a fist, but before he could use it, a shot rang out from above and a bullet struck between the three of them, spraying them with splinters of stone. The Slayers dodged left and right, and Henrik hunched back towards the archway with Felix. They looked up. The same spindly shadow was backing into the darkness of the rail tunnel, reloading as it went. Gotrek snatched up a chunk of rubble from the edge of the bridge and heaved it up after it.

The rock vanished into the arch and an angry squeal echoed from the hole. Gotrek, Felix and Agnar all looked at each other and backed under the lee of the arch.

‘Skaven,’ they said in unison.

‘Hoy!’ came a voice. ‘Who still lives?’

They looked across the chasm. Two of the wagon drivers stood in the opposite arch, peering across at them.

‘The Slayers and their rememberers!’ called Felix. ‘But take cover. There is a marksman above us.’

The drivers looked up, then stepped back into the tunnel. One shouted from the shadows. ‘We have ropes and pegs. We can get you across.’

'Not with that gunner above us,' muttered Felix.

'We shouldn't go back anyway,' said Henrik. 'Thorgrin will want to know what part the skaven are playing in all this. We should find them and discover their plans.'

Felix laughed. The way he spoke of it, it sounded as simple as going to the baker for some bread, not making their way through trackless, troll- and orc-infested catacombs without guide or map. 'You know the way to their lair, do you? An hour ago you didn't think they were involved.'

Henrik raised his chin. 'Agnar is an excellent tracker. If we can find the trail of the assassin above us, he can find their lair.'

'Aye,' said Agnar. 'I'll find them. Let's go. There's no going back anyway.'

Gotrek didn't move. He was staring directly at Henrik. The rememberer caught the look square between the eyes and stumbled at its fierceness.

'Wh-what are you looking at?'

'You have twice questioned my dedication to seeking my doom, human,' said Gotrek. 'Do not do so a third time.'

'Or what?' growled Agnar, stepping up to him.

Gotrek looked him up and down. 'If a dog bites me, I beat the master for not teaching it manners.'

Agnar snarled and raised his fists. Felix jumped between him and Gotrek.

'Slayers, please!' he said. 'Save it for the skaven, eh?'

The Slayers stood nose to nose for a long moment, then Gotrek turned and stumped down the passage. Agnar and Henrik started after him, glaring at his back.

Felix sighed and looked across to the drivers. 'Go back to Thorgrin. Tell him he fights skaven as well as orcs. We're going further in.'

'Skaven?' called the drivers in unison.

'Aye,' said Felix. 'Skaven.'

'Very well,' said the first. 'If we make it, we will tell him. Good luck to you.'

'Thank you,' said Felix, then lit his slotted lantern and started down the passage after the others into the unknown. 'We'll need it.'

FELIX AND HENRIK followed Gotrek and Agnar as they stumped forward, exploring side passages and debris-strewn stairways, looking for a way up to the rail-line tunnel and the trail of the skaven long-gunner. The whole party moved in a sullen silence, the recent squabbling suspended but most decidedly not forgotten. Felix could practically see the waves of anger pulsing between Agnar, Henrik and Gotrek. And he was fairly angry himself.

It seemed obvious to him that the rememberer was trying to provoke a fight between Agnar and Gotrek, but he couldn't figure out why. As far as Felix could remember, Gotrek had given Henrik no cause to be angry – at least no more cause than the brusque Slayer normally generated. The rememberer seemed to have developed his dislike for him in an instant. What was the reason for it? He couldn't truly think that Gotrek had denied Agnar his doom on purpose, could he?

After a lot of dead ends and backtracking, the Slayers eventually found their way up to the rail-line tunnel above the broken bridge, but the skaven gunner was long gone. Its spoor, however, was not. Tracks in the dust led back along the twisted rails and its greasy rodent stink lingered in the air.

They followed the tracks along the rails and through an ancient foundry. Ten great stone smelting furnaces squatted along the walls of a long, rubble strewn room – one of them had exploded some time in the distant past, and its stones were scattered all over. A dozen or so mine carts sat on the rails that ran past the smelters, or lay smashed and toppled on their sides.

In the centre of the room, they found a wide area of overlapping skaven tracks. Some were the usual, narrow dewclawed imprints, but some were bigger, with heavier claws. The prints went back and forth from the rails to the piles of rubble around the exploded smelter.

'Rat-ogres,' said Gotrek, pointing to the larger prints as Felix held up his lamp. 'The ratkin made them fill the carts with stones, then push them down the rails.'

'That would have taken all the time Migrunsson's crew were working on the bridge,' said Felix.

Gotrek nodded. 'They spied on us from the beginning.'

Agnar and Henrik added nothing to this conversation. Henrik just hummed his annoying tune. Agnar followed the skaven's trail out of the room to the west.

Gotrek fell in beside him, and the party followed the tracks down a broad stair to a lower level, then through a series of chambers that seemed to have been dwarf clan halls and common areas – galleries, meeting halls, feast halls – each larger and grander than the last. There was more ancient damage here – ceilings fallen in, walls crumbled. One room was charred black, and the stone pitted as if by acid. Another was filled with the skeletons of goblins, hundreds of them, all mounded at the edges of the room, as if they had died trying to escape something in the centre.

As they descended to the next level, the copper tang of recently spilled blood and the stench of skaven and acrid chemicals grew so strong that Henrik and Felix covered their mouths.

‘We must be close to their lair,’ said Felix, wiping tears from his eyes.

Gotrek shook his head. ‘The stench of a burrow is much worse. This is... something else.’

They followed the smell to an ancient workshop – and discovered a scene out of a nightmare. Between the dusty work tables and forges lay the bodies of scores of human warriors, their faces and bodies twisted in attitudes of agonising rictus, and the lanterns they had carried still burning. Felix stepped into the room to examine them more closely, then stepped back, gagging. Whatever poison had killed the men still lingered in the air, and it burned his eyes and nose.

‘This just happened,’ said Gotrek, covering his nose. ‘Not an hour ago. Their blood is still fresh.’

Felix squatted and raised his lamp, deciding it wisest to make his examination from the door. The eyes of the corpses bulged from their sockets, and bloated black tongues stuck from their mouths. The men’s hands were at their throats, and some had clawed great wounds in their necks in their desperation. The blood was still pooling beneath them.

‘Who are they?’ he choked. ‘And why didn’t they flee?’

‘They tried,’ said Gotrek. ‘Look.’

In the dim light of the dead men’s lanterns, Felix could barely make out what he was indicating, but he saw it at last. Splintered wood on the other doors of the room. One still had an axe buried in it. The men had tried to cut their way out.

‘They were locked in,’ he said at last. ‘A trap. What a horrible way to die.’

Agnar broke his silence at last. ‘I know that one,’ he said, pointing at a well-armoured man near the door. ‘He took Lanquin’s coin. As did that one. And him too.’

Felix turned to him. ‘They are all Lanquin’s mercenaries? But how did they come here?’

Henrik cleared his throat. ‘He made us swear not to speak of it to any who did not sign up with him, but Lanquin did not think Thane Thorgrin’s battle would win the day. He thought it would be better to take the fight to the orcs, and said he would send the best of his recruits to kill Stinkfoot in his lair.’

‘And he didn’t tell the thane?’ asked Felix.

Agnar shook his head. ‘The thane wouldn’t have allowed it.’

‘With good reason, it seems.’ Felix shuddered. ‘What a fool. To send his best men to die in a skaven trap. Who is left to fight in Thorgrin’s battle?’

‘The rank and file,’ said Henrik. He shivered too. ‘I warned him it was a mistake. He wouldn’t listen.’

Gotrek turned back to the corridor.

‘A mistake the ratkin saw coming,’ he muttered, but only Felix heard him.

ANOTHER LEVEL DOWN and things got more confusing. The area was a warren of clan burial chambers and treasure vaults, all mostly ransacked and desecrated. Tracks of all kinds wound through the halls – the boots of men, the hind-claws of skaven, the calloused feet of orcs, the paws of huge beasts – and Felix lost the trail of their particular skaven entirely, but Gotrek still seemed to be on the scent.

A while later the tracks of men, dwarfs and skaven all but vanished, and those of the orcs multiplied. The sour, fungal reek of the greenskins grew thick in the air, and rough symbols were daubed on the walls in blood and dung. These depicted fists, axes, skulls, but most of them had been crossed out, and a crudely drawn foot with wavy lines rising from it drawn on top.

‘I guess the rumours about this Stinkfoot becoming boss are true,’ said Henrik.

‘And the skaven walk openly into his territory,’ said Felix, looking at the skinny tracks that overlay the orcs’ heavier prints in the muck of the corridor.

‘Not openly.’

Gotrek turned at an intersection, then stopped at a narrow crack broken through the wall of the side corridor, studying it. ‘They’re sneaking in. This way.’

'And we're going to follow them?' asked Henrik, uneasily.

'You wanted to discover their plans,' said Gotrek.

He gripped the edges of the hole and pulled himself through. It was a tight squeeze, and he scraped his naked torso front and back before he called for the rest to come ahead.

Henrik swallowed and pushed his lantern through before him. 'At least we know the rat-ogres didn't go through this.'

Felix followed him, and Agnar brought up the rear. They found themselves on a narrow ledge, close to the ceiling of a looted vault. Dwarf ancestor faces looked down on smashed chests, heaps of trash, broken furniture and skeletons – dwarf, man, orc and skaven – that lay littered across the floor. A crude wooden ladder ran down to the mess from the ledge, but Gotrek disdained it and leapt to a stone statue of a prim dwarf maiden standing on a pedestal, then slid down to the floor. Agnar followed suit, but Henrik took the ladder and Felix followed him.

Looking around with his lantern, he saw that the skaven tracks crossed to a bigger hole knocked through the far wall. The doors of the vault were ajar, but the dust there was undisturbed. Felix could hear faint noises coming through it, however – the distant howling of orcs, the throb of their drums, and somewhat closer, a grunting and snorting that sounded like angry boars.

Gotrek started to the hole in the far wall, but before he got halfway there, orc shouting erupted in the near distance, and running boot steps thudded beyond the vault's partially open door. Gotrek and Agnar went instantly on guard, and Henrik and Felix drew their swords a second later, lining up behind them. The boot steps boomed closer, but ahead of them came a skittering clicking, then something scrawny and hunched scrambled through the vault doors and bolted for the ladder.

Gotrek and Agnar slashed at it as it went by, but it dodged past in a streak of brown fur, then ducked Felix's thrust and shot up the ladder to the ledge – the skaven gunner, hiding no more.

It grabbed the ladder in its disturbingly human hands and began to pull it up behind it, beady black eyes glittering malevolently. Felix lunged for the ladder, but just then the doors of vault slammed open and a crowd of orcs shoved in, shouting and holding up torches as they looked around. They pulled up short as they saw the Slayers in front of them, and raised their weapons, roaring. Felix let go of the ladder to face them as Henrik glared up at the skaven.

'Won't do your own dirty work, will you? Clever bastard.'

Its chittering sounded like laughter as it wormed through the hole, dragging the ladder after it.

Henrik turned back to the orcs and readied his sword. 'Well, we've killed this many before, haven't we, Agnar? We've killed ten times as many.'

Even as he spoke, the room shook with a heavy tread, and the orcs guffawed, grinning at the slayers as if they had a secret. Felix looked uneasily to the door in time to see an ugly head the size of a beer keg duck under the lintel and look around, ears flapping like drooping flags.

'Sigmar's balls,' said Henrik. 'A troll.'

From  
*Slayer's Honour*  
by Nathan Long