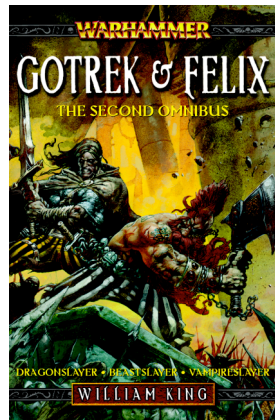


# ***GOTREK AND FELIX: The Second Omnibus***

*By William King*

The second fantastic omnibus edition features the adventures of the Old World's most notorious dwarf slayer, Gotrek and his human companion, Felix. Facing all manner of creatures from vampires to giants, Gotrek's only wish is to die a heroic death in battle – Felix must simply survive to tell the tale.



### **About the Author**

William King's short stories have appeared The Year's Best SF, Zenith, Interzone and White Dwarf. He has written seven Gotrek & Felix novels and the Space Wolf novels, starring Ragnar Blackmane. He lives in Scotland.

**•GOTREK AND FELIX•**

**GOTREK AND FELIX: THE FIRST OMNIBUS**

(Contains the novels TROLLSLAYER, SKAVENSLAYER and  
DAEMONSLAYER)

William King

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**ELFSLAYER**

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**•ALSO•**

**BATTLE FOR SKULL PASS**

Nathan Long

The following is an excerpt from *Gotrek and Felix: The Second Omnibus* by William King.

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Felix Jaeger looked northwards from the gate tower high above the outer wall of Praag. As if for reassurance, his hands rested atop the carved head of one of the huge sculptures that gave the Gate of Gargoyles its name.

From his high vantage point, he had a perfectly clear view for leagues. Only the long snaky curve of the river looping off to the west broke the monotony of the endless plains surrounding the city.

In the distance he could see the smoke of burning villages. It was war coming closer and it would reach the city in less than a day. He shivered and drew his tattered red cloak around his tall, lean form although it was not cold yet. If truth be told it was unnaturally hot. These last days of autumn had been warmer in Kislev than many a summer in his homeland, the Empire.

It was the first time in his life he had ever prayed for the onset of snow. Winter was deadly here, an untiring ally

who slaughtered the foes of Kislev, or so the locals claimed. Lord Winter was their greatest general, worth a legion of armed men. He wondered whether he would live to see winter's arrival. Even Lord Winter might prove powerless against the Chaos warriors and their evil magic.

The warriors of the advancing army out there were not mere mortals, but worshippers of Chaos fresh from the Northern Wastes. Of all the foolish things he had done in his career as Gotrek Gurnisson's henchman, putting himself in the way of the armies of the Dark Powers was conceivably the most foolish.

Felix had barely recovered from wounds taken in the battle with the dragon Skjalandir, and the orcish armies that had tried to take the dragon's treasure. The wizard Max Schreiber had healed him and had done the work well, but still Felix was not sure that he felt as strong as he had before. He hoped he could wield his sword with his customary skill when the Chaos warriors came. He would need to. If he could not, he would die. Most likely he would die anyway. The black-armoured riders and their brutal followers were not famous for their mercy.

They were unrelentingly savage and lived only to kill and conquer in the name of the daemonic powers they worshipped. Even the massively thick walls of Praag would not hold them back for long. If those wicked warriors failed, then the dark magic of their sorcerous allies would surely succeed.

Not for the first time, Felix wondered exactly what he was doing here, standing on the chilly walls of a fortified city, hundreds of leagues from home. He could be in Aldorf right now, sitting in the offices of the family business, haggling with wool traders and counting gold. Instead he was readying himself to face the greatest invasion the world had seen in two hundred years, since the time when Magnus the Pious had driven back the legions of the damned, and reunited the Empire. He glanced over at his companion.

As ever it was impossible to tell what the Slayer was thinking. The dwarf looked even more brutish and sullen than usual. He was short, the tip of the crest of red-dyed hair that rose above his tattooed and shaven head barely reached Felix's chest, but he was more than twice as broad as the man. In one hand he held an axe that Felix

would have struggled to lift with both his hands, and Felix was a strong man. The Slayer shook his head, and the gold chain that ran from ear to nostril jingled. He knuckled the patch that covered his empty eye socket, and spat over the wall.

‘They will be here by nightfall, manling,’ said Gotrek.

‘Or my father was an orc.’

‘You think so? The scouts say they are burning the villages as they come. Surely so great a horde could not move so quickly?’

Felix had a better idea of the size of the horde than almost any man in Kislev. He had flown over it in the airship, Spirit of Grungni, when he and the Slayer and their dwarf companions had returned from the lost city of Karag Dum. It seemed half a lifetime ago but was scant months in the past. Felix shook his head, amazed at how much his life had changed in that month, more than at any time since he had sworn his oath to follow the Slayer and record his doom in an epic poem.

In that time, he had ridden in a flying ship, visited a buried dwarf city in the blighted wastes of Chaos, fought with daemons, and dragons and orcs and beastmen. He

had fallen in love and pursued a troubled affair with the Kislevite noblewoman Ulrika Magdova. He had almost died of wounds. He had journeyed to the court of the Ice Queen, the Tzarina Katarin, bringing word of the enemy army to that fearsome ruler, and then he had come here with Gotrek and the others to help resist the invasion. It seemed as if he had barely time to catch his breath, and now he was caught up in a full-scale war with the assembled powers of Darkness.

He wondered again at his reasons for being here.

Certainly he still held to his oath to Gotrek. And Ulrika was here, waiting to see if her father and his men would make it to Praag before the Chaos horde. Felix knew she was going to be disappointed there.

He brushed a lock of long blond hair from his eyes, then shielded them with his hand. In the distance he thought he could make out flashes of eerie red and gold light.

Sorcery, he thought. The daemon worshippers are using their forbidden magic. He shivered again, thinking that perhaps it would be better to be in the counting house back in Altdorf.

He could not quite bring himself to believe it though. He knew he had become accustomed to a life of adventure. Even before his travels with Gotrek, life in the capital had seemed unbearably dull. He knew that no matter how often he thought a little dullness might improve his life, he could not go back to being what he had once been. Not that there was much chance of that anyway. He was in disgrace for killing a fellow student at the university in a duel. And he and Gotrek were wanted by the law for their part in the window tax riots.

‘Do you think that the Kislevites are the only ones who have scouts, manling?’ Gotrek asked. ‘The Chaos warriors will have outriders too. Not even they are mad enough to ride without them. They will be here soon.’ Felix did not like to speculate on what the followers of the Dark Powers were mad enough to do. To him it seemed madness enough to want to worship daemons anyway. Who could tell what else they were capable of? On the other hand, when it came to making war, it did not matter how crazed they were. They were as deadly as any other army, far more so than most. In this, the Slayer

was most likely right. He said so. Gotrek sucked his blackened teeth.

‘Tis late in the year for an army to be marching,’ he said.

‘The warlords must be confident they can take Praag before winter sets in. Either that or they don’t care.’

‘Thanks,’ said Felix sourly. ‘Always look at the bright side, don’t you?’

Gotrek cocked his head to one side, and spat over the wall. ‘They must be planning some trick.’

‘Maybe they have magic. Maybe the prophets of doom back there in the city are right. Maybe winter will not come this year. It is unseasonably warm.’

The words came out quickly and with less calm than he would have liked. He knew he was half hoping the Slayer would contradict him. After all, the dwarf had more experience of this than he did.

Gotrek grinned, showing the blackened stumps of most of his teeth. ‘Now who is looking on the bright side, manling?’

Sombre silence fell between them. Felix scanned the horizon. Dust and smoke clouds continued to rise. Way off in the distance, he could swear he heard the sound of

horns, the clash of weapons, the screams of dying men.

Only your imagination, he told himself.

Down below them, workers slaved away driving more sharpened stakes into the great pit that now lined the base of the walls. Behind them, more labourers reinforced the outer wall of the city with buttresses. Gotrek had done more than his share of supervising them. Under normal circumstances, Felix would have been hard put to believe these massive fortifications needed any augmenting. The walls of Praag were ten times as high as a man and so wide you could drive a wagon along the top. Towers bristling with siege engines spiked the walls every hundred paces or so. Felix could smell the acrid reek of alchemical fire coming from some of the towers. He shivered to think there was a weapon nearly as dangerous to its user as any enemy, but so desperate were the Kislevites that their alchemists guild had been producing it night and day since news of the invasion arrived. They were preparing containers of it for the siege engines.

To their credit, Felix thought, the Praagers and their duke had taken the news seriously. They had done everything

in their power to reinforce the strength of a fortress city many thought impregnable. These monstrous outer walls were but the first line of defence. Within the city was another wall, higher and even more formidable, and above that, on a massive spike of rock jutting out of the endless plains, loomed the titanic fortress that was at once the citadel and the duke's palace.

Felix glanced back over his shoulder. That citadel was a thing to give anyone nightmares and did as much as anything to maintain the reputation of Praag as a haunted city. Its walls were as strong as those of any Imperial fortress but they had been carved with many strange figures. Leering monstrous heads emerged from the stone. Massive tormented figures supported buttresses. Titanic dragon heads tipped tower tops. It was a work of art created by an insane sculptor. What sort of mind could have conceived and executed such a design, Felix wondered?

After the citadel, the whitewashed walls and red-tiled roofs of the rest of the city came as a relief. Even they looked strange and foreboding to Felix. The roofs were higher and steeply sloped, doubtless to let the snows of

Lord Winter slide more easily off them. The temple spires were topped by minarets and onion domes. This was not the architecture of the Empire. The sight as much as the guttural accents of the soldiers around them told Felix that he was a long way from home. He felt like an outsider here. The strangeness of the city allowed his mind to give credence to the tales of horror about the place.

It was said that ever since the last siege of Praag, when the city had been sacked by the forces of Chaos, that the place had been haunted, that all manner of eerie things happened here. It was said that on certain nights when Morrslieb was full that the spirits of the dead walked the streets and that sometimes the stones of the buildings could become animated. New statues could emerge from the stone. New gargoyles appeared where none had been before. Under normal circumstances, Felix would have found this hard to believe, but there was something about the atmosphere here that told him that there was at least some truth in these old tales. Swiftly he looked away from the city.

In the fields covering the vast plain around the city, peasants still worked, gathering their crops from the long strips of cultivated land, driving their beasts towards the city. There was a sense of feverish industry down there, of folk frantically gathering the last meagre scraps of the harvest. They worked as if their efforts might make the difference between life and death. Felix supposed it was true. If a siege came – no, when a siege came – every last bite of food would be precious. These Kislevites knew that. They had spent their entire lives here on the borderlands between the lands of men, and the lands occupied by the powers of Darkness.

Felix wondered if any peasants in the Empire could have remained so calmly at work. He doubted it. Most likely they would be long gone, their fields abandoned, their crops left to rot. Parts of the Empire were a long way from the war against Chaos, and Kislev stood as a bulwark between the nearest provinces and the eternal enemy. Some in the Empire doubted the very existence of the Chaos warriors. It was a luxury that was not available here.

Another glance around reassured him a little. Huge cauldrons for the burning oil were already in position along the walkways. Massive ballistae bristled from towers along the walls. Felix doubted that any army the Empire had ever mustered could take the city but the horde approaching was far from an ordinary mortal army. He knew it contained monsters and beastmen and evil magicians as well as crazed warriors gifted by the Dark Powers. Where the armies of Chaos rode, evil magic, plague and festering corruption were ever their allies.

Worse yet, Felix knew that within the city itself the approaching enemy most likely had powerful allies. The worshippers of Chaos were numerous and not all of them were mutants or wore the ornate black armour of the Chaos warrior. Some of those workmen there might be plotting to open the gates one dark night. One of those noble captains might well be plotting to poison his own men or lead them into an ambush. From his own experience, Felix knew that such things were far from uncommon. He pushed the gloomy thoughts aside. Now was not a good time to be thinking them.

He looked down at his hand and was surprised to see how steady it was. He had changed since he and the Slayer had started their wanderings. There was a time when simply knowing what was out there on the plain burning those little towns would have turned his bowels to water. Now he was capable of standing here and discussing it calmly with the dwarf. Maybe it's not the Chaos worshippers who are mad. Maybe it's me. His keen blue eyes picked up a disturbance on the horizon. Dust clouds, he thought. Men riding fast and coming closer. He glanced up at the guard tower overlooking the gate. Up there were hawk-eyed men with telescopes. One of them lifted a horn to his lips and blew a long blast. It was echoed by calls from other towers.

As soon as the call sounded, bells began to ring deeper in the city. The workmen down below calmly picked up their tools and made their way to the gates. Out in the fields, the peasants gathered the last turnips into their baskets, hoisted them and turned towards the gates. The speed of the people driving their flocks into the city

increased perceptibly. From behind him, Felix could hear the sound of armed men racing for the walls.

‘This duke might be mad, but there’s nothing wrong with the efficiency of his guard,’ Felix said, and then wished he hadn’t. Questioning the sanity of the ruler of a city at war was not a sensible thing, even if he was only repeating what most people said. What was acceptable in war and what was acceptable in peace were two different things.

‘If you say so, manling,’ said Gotrek. He did not sound very impressed, but then he never was by anything human. The elder race were like that. They would never admit that there was anything today that was not worse than it had been two thousand years ago. A very insular, backward-looking proud people, thought Felix.

Soldiers swarmed past them onto the walls. Most of them carried bows, a few of the higher ranks brandished swords as they shouted orders. All of them were garbed in the winged lion tabards that were the symbol of Praag. The same sign blazed on a hundred banners about them. An officer came rushing up to them, looking as if he was about to order them to leave. One look at Gotrek

convinced him otherwise. No one knew who the Slayer really was, but it was well known that he and his companion had come to Praag on that mighty flying ship bringing word of the invasion and orders from the Ice Queen herself. Felix had heard rumours that Gotrek and the other Slayers were emissaries from Karak Kadrin, the vanguard of a mighty horde of dwarfs come to aid Kislev in its hour of need. Felix fervently hoped it was true. From what he had seen of their enemies, the northerners were going to need all the help they could get. He wondered when the Spirit of Grungni would return, and what aid it would bring with it. Malakai Makaisson's airship was a mighty weapon but he was not sure what it could do against the army that was coming against them. Malakai had promised to return bearing soldiers but it was not really up to him. He was a Slayer and an engineer, not a king. Help would only come from the dwarfs if their rulers sent it. Or maybe not, Felix thought. In Karak Kadrin there were hundreds of Slayers. The members of that death-seeking cult would most likely come whether ordered to or not. After all, where else were they more likely to find a heroic death than here in

Kislev? If anything could atone for whatever sins had turned them into Slayers, surely falling in battle with the hordes of Chaos could.

Felix looked around to see if there were any of the other dwarfs present. None were that he could see. Snorri and Ulli and Bjorni were most likely still in the White Bear, throwing as much ale down their throats as they could manage while regaling each other with complaints about the weakness of human beer. Old Borek, the loremaster, had gone back to Kadrin with Malakai Makaisson. He still mourned the loss of his nephew, Varek. Felix did not blame him. There were times when he missed the quiet young scholar himself. It was a pity Varek had given his life saving the airship from the dragon Skjalandir. Better him than you, part of him thought. Shame filled him. He knew he should not think such things.

The dust clouds grew larger. Felix made out mounted men. To each rider's back was attached a feathered pole that looked like a bird's wing. Felix had no idea of the deeper significance of this emblem but he knew that it was the mark of the elite Kislevite cavalry. At this

moment, they did not look very elite. He could see that they looked battered and weary. If there had been a battle he would wager that they had come out on the losing side. Behind them he could see other riders, garbed in black armour, mounted on black steeds. He did not need Gotrek's muttered oath to tell him what they were. He too had fought Chaos warriors in his time.

Even as he spat out another curse, Gotrek moved towards the stairway. If the daemon worshippers reached the gate, he intended to be there to meet them. Felix followed him, loosening his sword in his scabbard. He did not know whether to be disappointed or glad that it showed no signs of mystical energy about to be unleashed. It appeared that the weapon had fulfilled its purpose when he had used it to slay the dragon. From behind him, he heard warriors roaring battle cries and challenges and encouragement to the winged lancers. It appeared that they too had realised who pursued their countrymen.

As he reached the bottom of the tower, he saw more winged lancers riding out through the gate. He had to huddle in the doorway at the foot of the stairwell to

avoid being ridden down. As the horsemen raced by, he saw their faces were grim. He could understand – the prospect of facing Chaos warriors was not one he relished himself.

As soon as the riders passed, the peasants started to stream in again. Felix found himself pushing against a tide of sweaty, dirty bodies. If it had not been for the presence of the Slayer ahead of him, he probably would have been swept back into the city by the crush. As it was the crowd parted around the Slayer like a stream swirling round a rock. Felix followed the eddy out across the packed earth bridge over the ditch surrounding the city walls and then ran. A few strides brought him abreast of the Slayer and he slowed his pace.

‘No need to run so hard. It looks like the battle will come to us,’ he said. It was true. The approaching Kislevites raced ahead of their pursuers, heading for the gates. The Kislevite reinforcements were spreading out into a long line, readying themselves to charge. Their change of formation swiftly blocked Felix’s view of the action. He could still hear screams and war cries and the sounds of blades impacting on flesh from ahead of him. Perhaps,

he thought, this is not such a good idea. Waiting to meet a charging cavalryman on open ground did not seem like a very clever plan. He wondered if he should mention this to Gotrek. Probably not. The Slayer had redoubled his efforts to get to the battle.

Ahead of them, the first of the fleeing cavalymen had passed around those who came to relieve them. Felix could see the fear written on their faces. They galloped like men who had seen the gates of hell open behind them. Given how tough Felix knew Kislevite cavalymen to be, this was not a reassuring thought. Anything that could make winged lancers break and run was most likely something to dismay the bravest. He glanced back over his shoulders at the walls lined with warriors. He was surprised how small a distance they had come from the city, and how much ground the pursuit had covered while he and Gotrek descended from the tower. It was all too possible that if the cavalry ahead of them broke and ran then the Chaos warriors might make it through the gates. Felix suddenly realised that he had no idea of how many of them there really were. He did not think it was likely that they could take the city, but perhaps they

might be able to hold the gates until reinforcements came. Stranger things had happened in times of war. Anyway, it would not be good for morale if the daemon worshippers set foot in the city so early in the siege. Ahead of them the captain of the riders gave the order to charge. Felix watched horses rear and then race towards their foe. War cries split the air. Moments later came the clash of lance on shield. He saw sparks fly, heard metal spear-tip screech against armour. Screams and bestial roars filled his ears. One man was tossed from his saddle. Horses reared. Ahead of them, men died. Just as suddenly, the Kislevites were broken. The lightly armoured lancers were no match for the heavily armoured Chaos warriors.

Knowledge of this did not affect Gotrek's determination to be part of the combat. With a mighty roar, he threw himself forward, diving into the battle like a swimmer leaping from rocks into dangerous water. Felix followed, knowing that his own chances of surviving the fray would be greatly increased if he stayed close to the Slayer. A black-armoured figure broke through the mass, cleaving the skull of a Kislevite rider with a massive

ebony rune sword, and came racing towards them.

Gotrek laughed and bellowed a challenge in dwarfish.

The rider seemed to understand and touched spurs to the armoured flanks of his mount, goading it directly at the Slayer.

In the brief moments it took the rider to close the gap between them, time seemed to stretch for Felix.

Everything appeared to happen with acute slowness, like in a nightmare. He picked out the elaborate metalwork on the Chaos warrior's armour, depicting the snarling heads of beastmen and daemons. He saw the strange evil runes blazing along its blade, and the ruddy molten glow from inside its elaborate bat-winged helmet that illuminated the space where eyes should have been.

Small jets of sorcerous flame emerged from his steed's nostrils, reminding Felix all too uncomfortably of the dragon he had so recently faced. Its eyes glowed red.

The Chaos warrior raced towards them. Felix did not think he had ever seen a horse that looked quite so big. It looked more like a moving hill of muscle than a riding beast. He could see enormous sinews contract and twist beneath its night-dark skin as it raced towards them.

Small clouds of dust erupted from under its hooves. Sparks flew where its black-iron shoes struck pebbles. Somehow, Felix found his blade already in his hand. He felt all the strength was draining out of him, but he had been in enough battles to know that this was an illusion. He knew that when the time came, he would move as quickly and forcefully as he needed to. At least he hoped he would.

Gotrek stood slightly ahead of him, axe raised high, glaring fearlessly at their oncoming foe. The rider laughed contemptuously as he saw the two of them attempt to bar his way. His horse thundered closer. Bloody foam erupted from its lips. Its yellow teeth were stained red, and Felix could see that they were not horse's teeth, they were sharp like the fangs of wolves. He did not know why that surprised him. He had seen far stranger mutations among the followers of Chaos. As the rider swept closer, he leaned sideways in his saddle in order to make a better strike against Gotrek. The Slayer stood still as a statue, waiting. At least, Felix hoped he was waiting. He had never known Gotrek to freeze in battle but there was a first time for everything.

At the last second before impact, the Slayer moved. He lashed out with his axe. A blow, swift and irresistible as a thunderbolt, struck the Chaos steed's legs. The beast tumbled, blood fountaining from its sheared limbs. Its rider cartwheeled from the saddle and skidded across the hard-packed earth to land at Felix's feet with a crash like an earthquake hitting an ironmonger's shop. Almost without thinking, Felix lashed out with his blade, driving it into the man's throat, smashing through the chainmail links that covered the flesh between helmet and breastplate. The Chaos warrior gurgled. Bloody froth bubbled through the hole in the armour. Felix withdrew his sword and chopped again, severing head from torso. He passed the fallen steed, feeling no sadness. The mount might be a dumb beast, but then again it might not. Some such creatures were preternaturally intelligent. All were fell foes.

He and Gotrek raced further into the battle. It was like being caught in a whirlwind of flesh. All around them, horses reared and pawed at each other. Lancers stabbed at armoured cultists. Men fought with unrestrained savagery. Gotrek moved with deadly power, lashing out

to left and right, killing everything that got in his path. Felix moved behind him, watching the Slayer's back, stabbing at anyone who tried to encircle him. Within heartbeats, they stood behind a barrier of dead horseflesh and dying men. Felix heard more war cries from behind them and knew that soldiers were emerging from the city to join the fray. The clatter of hooves told him that some of the winged lancers had rallied and were coming back to join the fight. Within moments, the balance of the battle had changed, and the Chaos warriors were in retreat with the Kislevites in pursuit. From the walls behind them came the sound of cheering.

Felix found himself looking up at one young Kislevite noble, mounted on a fine white steed. His hair and eyebrows were almost as white as his horse. His eyes were a chilly blue. The man's armour was heavier and more costly than that of any mere trooper. The gold-hilted blade he wielded in his right hand spoke of considerable wealth. Felix thought he recognised him from his brief audience with the duke. It was the ruler's brother Villem.

‘Not many men would have left the safety of the city to face a charge from the accursed ones,’ he said, stroking the long pale moustache that drooped down past his chin. It was a fashion among young Kislevite nobles. ‘It seems we owe you for more than bringing a warning from our fair ruler, the tzarina.’

‘I am not a man,’ said Gotrek. ‘As any fool can plainly see, I am a dwarf.’ The warriors around the noblemen flinched and brought their weapons to the ready position. Good, thought Felix, it’s not enough that we have enemies outside the city. Let’s have some inside too. To his surprise, the newcomer merely laughed. Felix had heard that the duke’s brother, like most of the ruling family, was mad. Apparently the madness went as far as tolerating behaviour that others might have taken as grievous insults. Whatever the reason, Felix was grateful for it. ‘I had heard that the elder race were proud and touchy, and Slayers most of all,’ he said.

‘No Slayer has anything to be proud of,’ said Gotrek. ‘As you say,’ said the stranger, although his jocular tone implied that he did not quite believe it. ‘Let all here bear witness that, I, Villem, of the House of Kozinski, am

grateful to you for your bravery, and would see it rewarded.'

'The only reward I require is a place in the forefront of the coming battle.'

'That should be easy enough to arrange, my friend.'

Felix prayed that the Slayer would not make some sort of sarcastic remark. After all, this was no mere noble; Gotrek was halfway to picking a fight with the brother of the ruling duke.

'I shall make sure my brother and liege hears of your brave deeds.'

'Thank you, milord,' Felix said.

'No, it is I who should thank you. You are an Empire man. Not many would come all this way to fight and perhaps die in defence of our lands. Such bravery should be rewarded.'

Felix looked up at him. Villem seemed a fair-spoken and pleasant-looking young man, but Felix had learned to mistrust noblemen, no matter how polite they were. Now did not seem like a good time to say this, however. Rumour had it that Villem could be a particularly unpleasant enemy.

‘All we wanted was a good fight,’ Gotrek said, disgruntled. ‘And one thing’s certain. We didn’t get it here.’

‘Wait a few more days, my friend,’ said Villem. ‘Then the fighting will be as hot and hard as any could wish, even a Slayer.’ The noble’s entourage nodded their agreement. Felix saw no reason to doubt his words either. Gotrek merely spat on the ground and glared into the distance, looking at the plumes of smoke rising on the horizon.

‘Bring them on,’ he said.

Villem laughed easily. ‘It is good that at least one warrior in the city is keen to face the foe,’ he said. ‘You are an inspiration to us all, Gotrek, son of Gurni.’

‘Just what I’ve always wanted,’ Gotrek said sourly. If he noticed the barbed glances of the nobleman’s lackeys, he gave no sign. The Slayer barely showed any respect for the rulers of his own people; he showed none whatsoever for humans.

Felix wondered whether this was a trait that was going to get them both killed one day. He felt like apologising for the Slayer’s attitude but he knew that Gotrek would more

than likely just contradict him anyway, so he kept his mouth shut and prayed that Villem was as tolerant as he appeared to be.

The nobleman gave no sign of taking offence, which was good, Felix decided, considering there were thousands of soldiers sworn to the defence of his person and city within easy call.

‘I must go now, but you will be welcome at the palace, should you decide to visit,’ he said, sweeping away.

‘That’s an invitation I will be sure to take up,’ Gotrek muttered sarcastically to his departing back.

One of the advisors turned and glared at him. There was murder in the man’s eyes.

I wonder who will kill us quicker, Felix thought, the Kislevites or the Chaos worshippers?

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