

CALDEN KEEP



BESTIARUM
— miniatures —

Though contemporary texts seek to portray Doaden's past as a golden age of enlightenment and bounty, one needs only to look at the ruins and remains for proof our forebears were not free of the soul-rot that pervades us today.

In the west of the realm lies the keep named Calden, though I was unable to find any instance of the place or its name in records and archives.

The locals I interviewed do not go there, and what little information I could garner was that the place is cursed.

After months searching for answers, one old crone living alone on the outskirts of a nameless village regaled me of a tale told by her own grandmother.

A tale of cruel lords and knights, who heaped such brutality upon their vassals that the peasant folk could take no more, and rose up in revolt to dethrone their cruel lord.

I must say, good reader, that I do not usually place much faith in such tales, for I know it is common for such legends to exist amongst the peasant folk as a palliative for their sad lots in life.

Though I must admit there is something about Calden Keep, it sits heavy on the hillside as I write, like some dark tumour on the hillside.

That crone's tale has stuck with me, and one thing I have grown certain of in my travels is that whether it be times of bounty or famine, mankind has always been capable of unparalleled cruelty.

*- From the Journal of Dreyen Solius,
Chronicler of the Realm's Ending.*

Faction Overview

A few days march from the western edges of the realm lies a great Fastness, Calden.

The folk who lived there long dead and forgotten.

For generations, all that was known to remain were slowly crumbling gravestones and a lingering atmosphere of bitterness and rage that discouraged settlement by those who were not deterred by the western forest's other myriad threats.

This ruined place had once been a valorous feudal court of knights and lords.

Although, as is the wont of the dark that resides in all men's hearts, what began as chivalric virtue was warped into an arrogant, isolationist pridefulness.

As their sense of superiority grew, so too did their levies and brutalities.

The peasant folk of the region rose up in revolt and struck down their once-protectors.

Their remains and the burial sites of their ancestors were desecrated, ensuring that the fallen warriors would never enjoy the peace of the grave.

Rumours of great, armoured monstrosities have arisen in recent times. Something has begun to stir in this lost Kingdom and woe betide any who stand in its way.





CROSSBOWMEN

While it was filled with the living, Calden's walls were manned day and night by these steadfast soldiers equipped with powerful arbalests, mechanical contraptions that rained down death from unreachable positions.

During military campaigns, detachments of these warriors were used to slaughtering their foes from well over 300 yards, often ending battles before they could even begin.

FOOTMEN

The most prevalent and versatile soldiers in Calden's army, thousands of footmen were used to conquer and police the vast areas under Calden's rule.

Now, risen once again to fulfill their lord's bidding, they remain staunchly loyal to their liege.



THE GOLIATH

Hatred is a double-edged sword. During the uprising against Calden, thousands of the lord's soldiers were slain, but for each warrior that fell, ten times the number of peasants were struck down in the melee.

The same anger and hatred that fueled the rabble in their uprising has trapped their souls in Calden, and the risen Goliath is the amalgamation of the thousands of fallen individuals of the unrelenting throngs; those who could not let go of their hatreds in death.

Now, reanimated by the foul necromantic energies which have strayed throughout Calden, this monstrosity stalks the streets wreaking havoc and continuing to seek vengeance on its former enemy.





HAMMER KNIGHT

In life, the lord of Calden preferred impact over efficiency.

Amongst his court, Knights quickly learnt that messier, blunter murder would draw their lords eager attention more readily than subtler means such hidden blades or poisons.

It was not just about the deed, but about sending a message ringing loud and clear to the conquered.

As such, the Hammer Knights grew in number, hulking warriors who would vie to wield the largest and heaviest weapons, weapons that they bear still in their risen forms.

HUNTING HOUND

The Lord's hunting hounds were his prized possessions.

Vicious beasts that bore more of the Lord's personality than his own kin, he would make demonstrations of feeding the beasts with the flesh of his enemies.

As years passed, he bred the monsters for ever more brawn and aggressive temperament.

And grew his kennels for use by his armies and watch.

When the rebellion came, many of the Peasant Folk fell to these vicious beasts, and by virtue of their ferocity, many of the canines survived the razing of Calden, fighting their way out into the wilds and breeding ever more vicious pups.

When the Lord arose again, these beasts heard the call of their master, and one by one, the packs returned to the Lord's side, taking their rightful place in Calden's court.





LORDSGUARD

At the height of Calden's strength, it was rare for the Lordsguard to ever leave their liege's side.

During court, the embittered rabble would often throw themselves at the lord, drawing knives or other weapons in an empty hope of striking a blow against their cruel master.

However, such acts were futile in the presence of these elite warriors, who stood ready to slaughter the transgressor, and often all the other commoners in the court, to ensure that any traitorous cohorts would be quashed.

In death the Royal Guard have lost none of their martial prowess.

LORDSGUARD CAVALRY

The Lordsguard Cavalry were the linchpin of the Wolf of Calden's bloody campaigns, often riding ahead of the army to skewer unprepared foes, or forming into tight formations to flank and strike enemy armies in a wave of blood and savagery.

Their effectiveness stemmed from their horses, trained in the harshest of conditions to never balk or run from combat.

Indeed, enemies have seen such horses with gaping wounds and leaking bones and viscera, still thirsting for combat and bringing their riders ever deeper into the melee.



REDEMPTION

A horrifying soulless abomination, this monstrosity was raised by stray necromantic energies that affected the old graveyard outside of Calden's chapel.

Now, it stalks the area killing, smashing, and consuming raw materials to grow its body and unstoppable mass of gravestones, metalwork, and cadavers.



UNDEAD KNIGHT

These once-great lords and warriors have lain in rest within the temple crypts long before the events that unfolded in Calden.

Like the Redemption beast, these ancient ones are the result of stray necromantic energies, and wander the area mindlessly, searching only for life to destroy.

Though present in Calden, these monsters are not exclusive to the area, and can be found anywhere in Doaden where such magic is at work.



WOLF OF CALDEN

Though the Wolf of Calden's name has long been lost to time, his reign of terror and iron will reverberates in the thousands of souls he has slaughtered during his many campaigns.

He commanded Calden's defense during the peasant uprising and stood firm at his lord's side while the masses broke the gates.

The bloodthirsty general met his end making a final stand outside of the great doors of the inner keep, giving his lord enough time to lock the keep for good.

Now, the Wolf of Calden's risen spirit, driven by anger and thirsting for Vengeance against those who destroyed him, musters his forces once again to subjugate the lands and bend them to his iron will.

ACCURSED DESTRIER

The Accursed Destrier was the Wolf of Calden's warhorse that served him unfailingly during many years of his career.

In life, the beast seemed almost fearless, charging headlong into combat and tearing into enemy soldiers with its hooves and teeth.

Its twisted and malformed body has now risen along with its master and the two ride together once again.



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