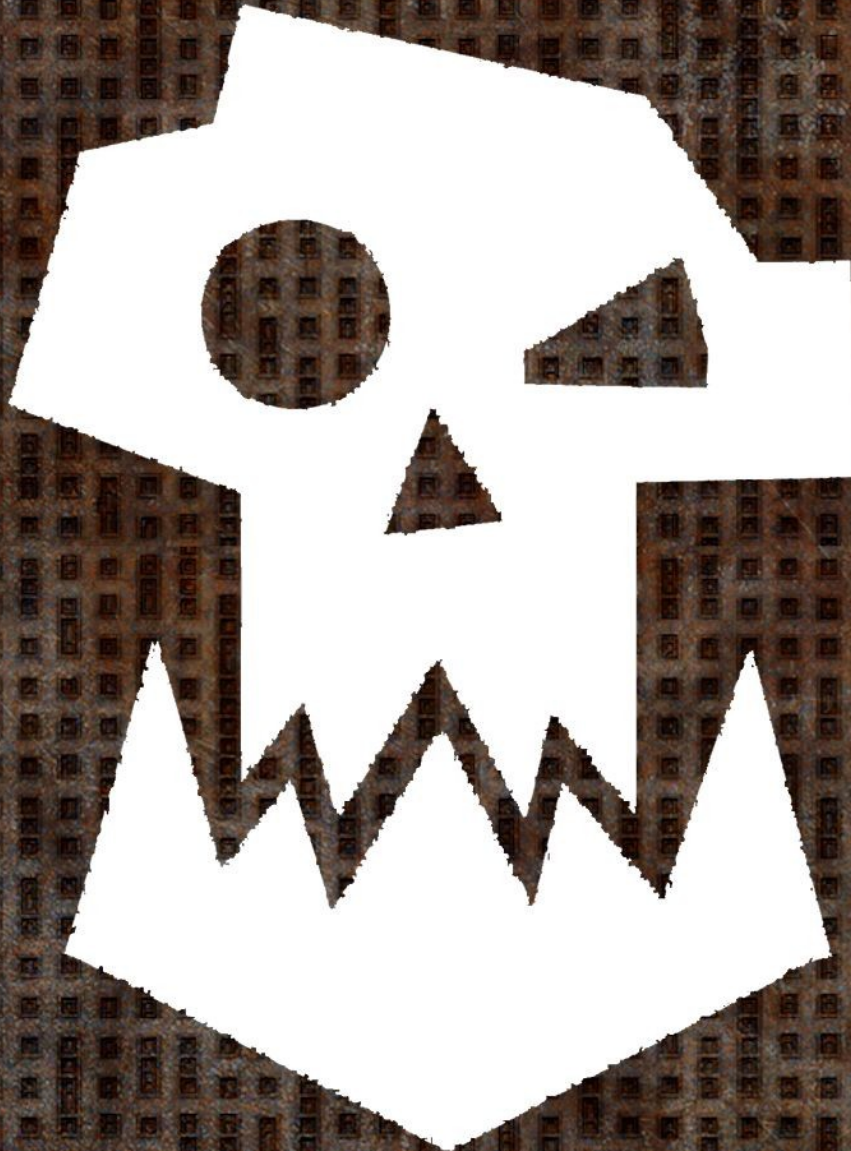


RUNNIN' IN



BY STEPHEN J DUTTON



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Wozgul is an Ork living on the fringe of society. Condemned by an injury to always be smaller and weaker than other Orks he is forced to live a largely solitary life. That is until he receives an offer to make him stronger than any other Ork. The problem is that he needs to come up with a hundred teeth to take advantage of it.

Further Warhammer 40,000 fan fiction is available at:
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Wozgul woke up when he felt something tugging on his leg and he glanced down his bed to see that his shack had been invaded while he slept by a group of about half a dozen Gretchin who were going through his meagre possessions. One of the group was even tugging at his boot in an attempt to remove it while he slept.

“Gerroff!” he yelled as he sat up and he reached to the side of his bed where a crutch was leant up against the wall and he grabbed hold of it before swinging at the Gretchin by his feet. The end of the crutch struck the Gretchin and he yelled as he flew across the interior of the shack.

“E’s awake! Da cripple’s awake!” another of the Gretchin shouted and while Wozgul was struggling to get to his feet the entire group raced for the nearest exit, some going for the door, others for the window and one diving for the hole that they had obviously cut to gain entry.

The fleeing Gretchin were able to release the bolts and escape before Wozgul could catch them but he still tucked his crutch under his arm and hobbled out into the street to look for them and he spotted the group standing on a mound of dirt close by.

“Ha ya cripple! Can’t catch us!” one of them yelled.

“Got ya choppa!” another shouted as he waved Wozgul’s knife in the air and the Ork snarled, letting out a growl. Wozgul’s knife was his prized possession, the only decent weapon that he owned. He had found it among a pile of scrap taken from a long forgotten battlefield where two rival greenskin armies had fought one another not long after he had first crawled up out of the ground from the pod he had grown in. Like most Orks he had soon been discovered by other, more civilised greenskins and brought to their settlement where he had joined with other like-minded Orks as part of a mob. The mob that Wozgul had joined went out on a large salvage expedition not long after he had become one of them, not yet trusted with anything more than a crude knife while he proved himself. However, during the course of that expedition Wozgul had been caught up in the collapse of an unstable structure and the other Orks had simply written him off as dead and abandoned him. It had taken Wozgul several days to finally free himself before making his own way back to the nearest settlement. By this time his injuries had largely healed themselves with the exception of his leg which had been broken in the initial collapse. The bone had knitted itself back together of course, Orks possessed excellent healing abilities but it had not set quite properly and Wozgul was left with a severe limp that required him to use a crutch to walk very far. This injury and his resulting disability had seen Wozgul largely rejected by other Orks. They tolerated his presence in their settlement but he was unable to rejoin his original mob or find another that would accept him. Now he lived alone on the outskirts of the settlement in his tiny shack with the few possessions he had been able to gather and taking whatever menial jobs he could. In theory he could have his bad leg replaced with one taken from a corpse, the biology of Orks made such transplants straight forwards but to get a leg of the right size would require finding the corpse of a very young Ork and they were harder to come by than those of older Orks who had fought enough that they had increased in size and weight.

While most Orks would ignore Wozgul as much as they could the same could not be said of Gretchin. The diminutive cousins of the Orks saw him as an easy target. As well as being alone and slow, Wozgul was smaller and weaker than most Orks. He was still significantly stronger than an individual Gretchin but they could generally avoid him when he started to fight back, just as this band of thieves had done.

Looking down at the ground Wozgul saw a fist sized lump of stone and he reached down to pick it up before hurling it towards the Gretchin holding his knife. The rock hit the Gretchin in his face and he gave a brief scream of pain, dropping the knife and clutching at his face. Wozgul reached down and picked up another lump of rock before he started to hobble towards the dirt mound and the cowardly Gretchin panicked.

“E’s comin’!” one of them exclaimed, “Run for it!” and the Gretchin scattered as they ran.

Wozgul continued to hobble towards the mound where his knife was still lying on the ground and he bent down to pick it back up before examining it for damage. The poor light made it difficult for him to make out the markings that had been etched on the blade by its human makers but he could tell that there was no damage to the cutting edge that mattered and he started back towards his shack.

As he reached his shack the Gretchin that he had hit with his crutch came staggering out, clutching his head and groaning. Wozgul snarled at the Gretchin as he looked up at the Ork in terror before Wozgul stabbed him through the chest with his knife. Then leaving the body of the Gretchin outside Wozgul went back into his shack to bed.

When the sun came up the next morning the body of the Gretchin was already gone from outside Wozgul’s shack, possibly removed by the other Gretchin whose job it was to keep the settlement clean or perhaps eaten by either a passing squig or even other Orks or Gretchin.

The first thing that Wozgul did was inspect the outside of his small shack, walking all the way around. The hole that the Gretchin had made to get inside the shack would obviously need repairing but he wanted to see if there was any further damage to be patched. There were some markings on the door and window shutters that suggested the Gretchin had attempted to get in through them but failed and so had made their own way

in where the wall was weak. The issue clearly was in the material used to build the shack, when Wozgul had first claimed what was an empty and abandoned structure on the outskirts of the settlement it had been made entirely of wood and lacking a door or shutters. He had added these using scraps of sheet metal that he had come across that either had been abandoned or their owners had made the mistake of leaving them unattended long enough for even Wozgul to be able to drag them away and it occurred to him that he could make his home far more secure if he could line his shack with more metal than any further attempts to break in would achieve nothing more than wasting the time of whoever attempted it.

This of course meant that Wozgul had to acquire the necessary pieces of metal and the tools needed to install them inside his shack. The tools he knew that he could hire from a mekboy, he was sure that even the few teeth he had to spend would be enough for that but he still had to come up with the materials himself. Luckily Wozgul had a talent for scavenging, a trait that was universal among members of the Death Skulls clan and although he could not afford to paint his face or belongings blue and white to proclaim this he still knew how to loot and scavenge. Had he not then it was unlikely that he would have survived as long as he had.

The only issue was that to obtain the tools and materials he needed to leave his shack and although he could lock the door and window there was still a hole in the wall to worry about so to avoid having his belongings stolen Wozgul bundled what few things he owned up in a blanket that he then threw over his shoulder to carry as he made his way towards the place that he knew he could find the metal that he needed.

The various Ork settlements on the planet were locked in a never ending cycle of conflict with one another. This was not unusual for Ork worlds that often remained in a state of constant civil war until a single warboss could unite them by force. The result of this was that there were many battlefields scattered around, one of the most recent of which was located just outside the settlement where Wozgul lived. Here just a few days earlier a force of Orks riding in a variety of fighting vehicles had attacked the settlement only for their force to be wiped out, the few survivors forced to flee on foot. Now the area was littered with the remains of their wagons and trucks and many of the Orks of this settlement were plundering them. The Ork scavengers were primarily after weapons and mechanical components that they could make use of themselves but there was also a great deal of general scrap metal to be had from the wrecks and Wozgul hoped that he could secure a few pieces for himself. Of course if he happened to come across anything else interesting, such as a weapon of some sort, then he would gladly take that as well.

As he had expected when Wozgul reached the battlefield he found that there were already hundreds of Orks and Gretchin present, scouring the area for anything of interest. Wozgul paused to look around, searching for a vehicle wreck that did not have any other greenskins searching it and he noticed the burnt out remains of a battlewagon that did not appear to have anyone working on it. Thankfully this was quite close to where Wozgul stood and he began to walk towards it. The ground here was softer than within the settlement and his crutch sank into it as Wozgul hobbled towards the battlewagon, slowing his progress significantly. When he finally reached the wreck Wozgul found that the reason it had been ignored so far was that it was little more than an empty shell. All that was left of the engine were a few small pieces of scrap metal, the rest of it having been smashed by a cannon shell that had punched its way through the battlewagon from one side to the other and Wozgul guessed that this had also been the source of the fire that had gutted the rest of the vehicle. Judging by the smell of burned flesh coming from inside it some of the crew had also been trapped inside as it burned and when he peered inside Wozgul saw several burned corpses within the vehicle. What mattered most to Wozgul though was the metal that made up the structure of the battlewagon rather than its engine or former crew and fortunately for him very little seemed to be missing.

Wozgul walked around the battlewagon, searching for pieces of the hull that looked loose and when he found one he pulled at it to see if he could rip it free but he lacked the necessary strength to do this so he climbed inside instead. Here the patchwork of metal used to make up the hull of the battlewagon were not secured as strongly as the ones on the outside and Wozgul was able to pull several pieces loose, tossing them into a pile beside where he set down his bundle of possessions. One of the pieces of metal slipped from Wozgul's grasp when he tore it from the inside of the battlewagon and it clattered to the floor, landing on top of a badly charred Ork corpse. Wozgul crouched down to pick the metal and as he did so he noticed that there was something sticking out from beneath the corpse. Wozgul smiled when he saw this, recognising the grip of a firearm immediately and when he pulled on it a simple slugga came free. Although there was a magazine in the weapon this had burst open when the ammunition it had contained cooked off in the fire but inspecting the pistol sized weapon and cycling the mechanism suggested that it had survived intact.

It then occurred to Wozgul that maybe more interesting items could be found on the other bodies in the ruined battlewagon and he tucked the slugga into his shirt before crouching down beside the burned body so that he could search it. The first place he checked was inside the corpse's mouth where he quickly confirmed that it still had most of its teeth. Reaching into the dead Ork's mouth Wozgul grabbed a tooth between his

thumb and forefinger before tugging as hard as he could. Sure enough the tooth detached and Wozgul inspected it to make sure that it was not too badly damaged to be spent. It was then that Wozgul noticed a Gretchin peering into the battlewagon but as he turned to face the diminutive creature he ducked out of sight. Getting back to his feet Wozgul went to investigate, looking out of the battlewagon through the same hatchway that the Gretchin had looked in through but there was no sign of him. Wozgul then went back to the corpse he had been checking and crouched back down beside it before he continued to extract its teeth, making a small pile of them on the floor beside him. The process would have been quicker if Wozgul had had a set of pliers that would have allowed him to apply more leverage to the teeth but since Ork teeth had developed to continually be shed he could still manage to remove them by hand.

The dead Ork had almost a full mouth of teeth and if the other Ork bodies had a similar number then Wozgul knew that this was going to be a very profitable trip, it may even net him enough teeth to be able to buy a vehicle of some kind. However, before he could finish emptying the dead Ork's mouth of teeth he heard the distinctive sound of boots on metal and he turned towards the back of the battlewagon to see a trio of Orks climbing aboard while the same Gretchin he had seen peering inside earlier cowered behind them.

"See! I told ya all dat 'e was stealin'!" the Gretchin exclaimed.

"Yeah it looks like 'e is stealin'." the lead Ork said, glaring down at Wozgul.

"It ain't stealin'. I was 'ere first." Wozgul replied as he quickly scooped up the teeth that he had already extracted and stuffed them into his pocket before leaning on his crutch for support as he got back his feet.

"Did ya 'ear dat lads?" the lead Ork said to the others standing beside him with a grin, "Da cripple says dat 'e got 'ere first. I guess dat means dat dis wagon belongs to 'im."

"Gettin' 'ere first means nothin' if ya ain't strong enough to 'old onto it." one of the other Orks replied and all three glared at Wozgul. Although none of the three were particularly large for Orks, certainly none of them would be considered a nob, all three of them were significantly larger than Wozgul.

"Get lost cripple. Go find someone wot's got some runt work for ya instead." the lead Ork told him, "Ya can leave dem teef I just saw ya stuffin' in ya pockets too." he added.

"Dey is mine. I-" Wozgul began before the lead Ork suddenly lunged at him and grabbed hold of him by the collar.

"I said give us back da teef!" he yelled.

Despite his relative weakness Wozgul still had the instincts of an Ork and his instinct when threatened was to fight with whatever weapons he had to hand. The only true weapons he had were the pistol he had just found but was empty of ammunition and his knife that was tucked into his belt. However, he also had something else already in his hand that he could use as a weapon if necessary.

His crutch.

Wozgul swung the end of his crutch at the Ork and struck his shoulder. Unfortunately the blow was too light to cause any damage to the other Ork and instead he just snarled and growled at Wozgul before he ripped the crutch from his hand and hurled it across the inside of the battlewagon. Then he headbutted Wozgul and slammed him against the wall. The other two Orks then rushed forwards to join in, none of them having any qualms about attacking someone smaller and weaker than they were. The lead Ork let go of Wozgul and he dropped to the floor where all three Orks began to rain down blows and kicks on him while he was too dazed to even try to fight back. They could have continued this until Wozgul was dead but instead the lead Ork signalled for them to stop after a short while and he reached down, putting his hand into Wozgul's pocket and pulling out the teeth that he had put in there.

"Dis'll do lads. Now let's get rid of dis cripple." he said and he grabbed hold of Wozgul again, dragging him to the hatchway and shoving him out of the battlewagon.

Landing heavily on the ground Wozgul began to crawl away before all of a sudden his crutch landed just ahead of him after being thrown out of the battlewagon by the Orks who had just beaten him. Then the bundle of his belongings landed close by as well and burst open, scattering the contents over a small area.

"All dis scrap is ours! Now get lost!" the lead Ork called out to him.

Wozgul quickly gathered up his belongings again, wrapping them in the blanket before he picked up his crutch and began to hobble away while the Orks who had beaten him just watched before they went back inside the battlewagon and began to loot it for themselves. The only thing that Wozgul had been able to keep for his efforts was the slugga and he made sure to keep this out of view as he headed away, not wanting to risk that being taken from him as well.

With his attempt to obtain scrap metal to repair and reinforce his home foiled Wozgul made his way back into the settlement. He knew that he would still be able to patch the hole but he would need some nails to do this. Luckily for him he would not need a hammer as well, the grip of the slugga he now owned would easily be strong enough for him to bash the nails into the wood.

To obtain the nails he needed Wozgul headed for the mek huts nearest to his shack. Here in a cluster of chaotic workshops Ork mekboys produced the wide variety of machines that Ork civilisation used. The vast majority of these were combat orientated, from small arms such as the slugga that Wozgul now possessed up to the largest battlewagons. The mekboys themselves would not lower themselves to making something as trivial as nails, instead delegating such a task to Gretchin who had been trained to make them through a series of beatings until they got the method right.

Wozgul went to the first workshop he came to, knowing that such a mundane item as nails would be available from any of them and as he approached the entrance the mekboy who operated the workshop himself appeared in the doorway and looked him up and down.

"Wotcha want?" he asked

"I needs some nails. To fix me shack." Wozgul told the mekboy and he nodded.

"A toof gets ya an 'andful of 'em." he said.

"I got dat." Wozgul replied.

"Den come on in." the mekboy said before turning around and heading back into his workshop, "Runt! Bring us some nails." he shouted and when Wozgul entered the workshop behind him a Gretchin had brought a large clay jar to the mekboy. Glancing around the workshop Wozgul saw numerous tools and pieces of machinery in various states of repair. In addition to this there was something large at one end of the workshop that was hidden from view by an enormous sheet that had been draped over it and Wozgul stared at this for a few moments before he turned his attention back to the mekboy and the jar of nails that had brought him to the workshop.

The mekboy reached into the jar and then withdrew it with a handful of nails held in it that he placed on the bench beside the jar. Wozgul set his bundle down and leant his crutch against the bench while he took out his money pouch. As he did this another Ork entered the workshop and both Wozgul and the mekboy turned around to see who it was.

The newly arrived Ork wore a thick apron over his clothes that was covered in splatters of blood while assorted sharp tools hung off his waist. It was obvious that the Ork was a painboy, one of the Orks' surgeons. Although mekboys and painboys focused on different subjects there was some crossover, with mekboys making the tools that the painboys used just like they made other tools.

"Ave ya got dem legs for us?" the painboy asked, looking at the mekboy.

"Yeah. 'Alf a dozen just as agreed." the mekboy replied and he pointed across the workshop to a set of long wooden crates, "Runts, get dem boxes loaded in da doc's wagon."

"Legs?" Wozgul commented.

"Yeah legs. Bionic replacements for lads wot 'as 'ad 'em blown off but can't find a real one or sometimes just fer lads wot want an upgrade." the mekboy said.

"Ya looks like ya could do with an upgrade yaself." the painboy added walking towards Wozgul and looking at his injured leg, "Wot wazzok fixed dat one dat way? Ain't fit to be called a doc."

"Wasn't a doc. It just 'ealed like dis." Wozgul replied.

"Well den lad, give us twenty teef and I'll fit a nice new metal one." the painboy said.

Wozgul thought about this, a new leg would allow him to join an Ork mob again. The drawback was that he didn't have twenty teeth to his name. His pouch contained only seven and he was about to spend one of these on the nails he needed. Then another thought occurred to him, although having a bionic leg sounded good a metal limb would not grow if he did and a poorly fitting leg would leave him right back where he started.

"Wot 'appens if it gets too small?" he asked.

"Well den ya can buy another. I'd even give ya a trade in dependin' on wot condition da old one was in." the painboy replied.

This was what Wozgul had been afraid of. Even if he could afford a bionic leg now he would have to keep paying for more as he grew and the cost could keep rising.

"If ya worried about dat den dare is another option lad." the mekboy said unexpectedly and both Wozgul and the painboy looked at him, "Ya see da doc 'ere and meself 'ave been workin' on somethin' special. 'Ow strong would ya like to be exactly?"

"I wants to be da strongest Ork anywhere." Wozgul responded, frowning as he remembered the beating that he had just received.

"Well den lad we may just 'ave da answer for ya. Get us an 'undred teef and I guarantee dat da doc and I can make ya bigger and stronger dan anyone else around dese parts. It'll be a one off fee and all. No need to worry about bits not fittin' any more. So 'ow does dat sound to ya?" the mekboy said and a smile spread across Wozgul's face.

"It sounds good." he said but then his face fell, "But I ain't got an 'undred teef. I got seven. Six after da nails and dare ain't enough in me mouth to make up da difference if I 'as 'em all pulled."

"I tells ya wot den lad, da doc and I can wait a few days yet. Bring us da teef and we'll see ya right." the mekboy told him.

Wozgul was about to simply pay for his nails and leave the workshop when an idea occurred to him. Had he been able to finish removing all of the teeth from the bodies in the battlewagon then he would have the hundred needed for the mekboy to make him strong. Of course now there were three other Orks plundering that particular wreck as well as any Gretchin they had brought to help them. However, if Wozgul could deal with them then he would be able to take those teeth for himself.

Taking the slugga he had recovered from under his shirt Wozgul placed the weapon on the workbench.

"I needs bullets for dis." he said and the mekboy nodded.

"Sure. 'Ow many?" he asked.

"How many will these buy?" Wozgul asked, placing his remaining six teeth on the bench beside the gun.

"A magazine with eight bullets in is a toof. Ya can 'ave six magazines for dat. Or if ya wants spare bullets without da magazines I can do ya ten bullets per tooth." the mekboy answered.

"I'll just take da bullets in da magazines." Wozgul said, not wanting to have to worry about reloading individual rounds.

"Grot, go get us some slugga ammo." the mekboy told one of his Gretchin staff and shortly after one of them came towards them dragging a crate filled with slugga magazines, "Ere ya go den lad." the mekboy said to Wozgul as he counted out six of the magazines onto the bench and then scooped up the teeth offered in payment while Wozgul loaded his weapon before tucking it into his belt.

"A 'undred teef, right?" he said and the mekboy nodded.

"Dat's right, an 'undred. But ya needs to be quick." he said.

"Don't worry. I'll be back by mornin'." Wozgul replied before he gathered up his belongings and hobbled out of the workshop.

"Is ya daft?" the painboy then said to the mekboy, "I knows wat ya is thinkin'. We've got loads of volunteers waitin'. Why pick the cripple?"

In response the mekboy then smiled at the painboy.

"Because I just made a sale out of it." he said before he shrugged his shoulders, "Besides, maybe dat cripple'll get lucky. Da warboss is payin' us an 'undred teef 'imself just to get dis thing in 'is army. Dis way we can split another 'undred between us as well. Dat's fifty teef each of pure profit."

The painboy then smiled back at the mekboy.

"Dat does sound like a good idea after all." he replied.

Wozgul returned to the battlefield as quickly as he could manage on his bad leg, stopping when he saw the isolated battlewagon that he had tried to scavenge scrap metal from earlier. Now though the idea of merely taking a few pieces of metal from the wrecked vehicle seemed ridiculous to him, he wanted something far more valuable. Looking at the battlewagon he could see that some pieces had been removed since he last saw it, several of the wheels were now missing for example. Wozgul did not care about these though, he was only interested in the teeth of the dead crew and also of any other Ork inside.

Watching the vehicle closely Wozgul saw the same three Orks who had beaten him and chased him off earlier moving about inside, obviously stripping it of any surviving components. This was good news, even if they had removed the teeth from the vehicle's late occupants the trio of orks would not have let any of that cash out of their sight just in case it was stolen.

From elsewhere Wozgul could hear the sound of heavy machinery running as vehicles considered worth salvaging intact were towed away and others were being cut up with power tools, all of which would serve to conceal any noise that Wozgul made. Watching the battlewagon he was tempted simply to walk up to it as quickly as possible before shooting his slugga in through the hatchway when all of a sudden one of the trio of Orks jumped out of the battlewagon and started to walk away from it, heading for a nearby clump of vegetation. Seeing his opportunity to take one of the Orks while he was on his own Wozgul started to follow him.

The Ork entered the undergrowth and Wozgul went in after him, drawing his slugga in his free hand and advancing towards the sounds he was making. It was obvious from these sounds that the Ork had come here to relieve himself and when Wozgul caught sight of him he was squatting down with his back turned. However, when Wozgul moved in closer for a better shot the other Ork heard the sound of him moving through the undergrowth towards him and turned his head.

Seeing Wozgul pointing a slugga straight at him startled the other Ork and he fell sideways as he attempted to pull his trousers back up with one hand and draw his own slugga with the other. Wozgul fired his slugga before the other Ork could draw his weapon and he felt the gun kick in his hand. The bullet missed the other Ork though, instead striking a nearby tree and showering him with splinters of wood.

The other Ork lost his balance as he flinched to avoid the splinters getting into his eye but he was still able to finish drawing his weapon and returned fire. However, his accuracy was no better than Wozgul's had been

and the bullet went wide, though it was close enough that Wozgul threw himself aside to avoid being hit by a follow up shot and as he leapt he waved his slugga in the direction of the other Ork and fired it repeatedly until he heard a 'click' after the last round from the magazine was fired and he tried to fire it without any ammunition left. He fumbled with the magazine release before inserting another one and chambering a round. He was just about to begin firing again when something occurred to him, his opponent had not fired any more shots at him in return.

Steadying himself on his crutch, Wozgul got back to his feet while keeping his slugga pointed towards the other Ork who was now lying motionless on the ground. Wozgul advanced cautiously, keeping his weapon trained on the other Ork just in case he was still alive but as he got closer he saw the bullet holes in the other Ork's body and the expanding pool of blood on the ground. Realising that his opponent was dead Wozgul grinned and then laughed. This was the first time that he had killed an Ork rather than a mere Gretchin or a squig for food and he knew exactly what he now needed to do. Tucking his slugga back into the back of his belt he hurried over to the body and knelt beside it so that he could search it for anything useful or valuable. The most obvious item of value was the dead Ork's weapon, a pistol similar in size and capability to the one Wozgul already had though the two weapons were not identical, no two Ork creations ever were. Although Wozgul already had a weapon equivalent to this slugga he took the extra one anyway, hoping that if nothing else he could trade it in with the mekboy against the hundred teeth he had to come up with.

Next Wozgul checked the various pouches and pockets of the dead Ork and he quickly found what he was really looking for, a bag attached to the dead Ork's belt that contained teeth and from the number present Wozgul guessed that these included a share of those taken from the occupants of the burned out battlewagon. These were not the only teeth that the dead Ork had though and when he was done going through all of his pouches Wozgul peered into his mouth where he saw almost full upper and lower sets of teeth with just a few gaps where they had fallen out and not yet regrown. The Ork had not been dead long enough for these to start to loosen though and Wozgul could not simply pull them out by hand so instead he looked around and picked up a rock that he saw nearby. Then he slammed this down into the dead Ork's face as hard as he could repeatedly, striking around his mouth to knock out the teeth. After several blows Wozgul stopped and reached into the now mutilated Ork's mouth again and began to collect the rest of his prize.

Wozgul had taken too many teeth from the dead Ork to be able to count them easily so rather than take a chance on not having enough to pay the mekboy already he decided that he would have to take the teeth from the other two in the battlewagon as well.

Before he approached the wrecked vehicle though he paused to gather up a number of stones that were the right size to fit in the palm of his hand and bundled these up in the dead Ork's jacket. This bundle was too heavy for him to pick up and carry so instead Wozgul dragged this from the undergrowth until he was in throwing distance at which point he stopped and unwrapped the bundle. Wozgul could hear the sounds of banging coming from within the battlewagon as the other two Orks continued with the process of removing anything of any value. This was just what Wozgul wanted, the Orks at work rather than just waiting for their comrade to return and he reached down to pick up one of the rocks before hurling it at the side of the battlewagon. The throw was on target and the rock bounced off the side of the vehicle but nothing happened in response so Wozgul picked up another rock and threw it at the battlewagon as well. He repeated this several times and each rock bounced off the side of the wrecked battlewagon without inflicting any further damage. However, while the first couple of impacts were ignored by the pair of Orks inside the repeated strikes eventually became too annoying to them for them to ignore.

"Sod off ya runts!" one of the Orks bellowed as he strode to the open hatchway and looked out of the battlewagon, expecting to find several Gretchin throwing rocks who would flee the moment that they saw him. However, rather than a group of cowardly Gretchin he instead found himself looking at Wozgul, "You!" he exclaimed, "Get out of 'ere ya cripple!"

Wozgul remained where he was and did not reply. Instead he reached down and picked up yet another rock that he hurled directly at the Ork standing in the hatchway and this struck him right between the eyes causing him to drop the crowbar he held. The Ork gave a cry of pain, and clamped his face in his hands for a few moments before he lowered them and glared at Wozgul with fury in his eyes while blood dripped from his nose.

"I'll 'ave ya for dat ya cripple!" he bellowed and he picked up his crowbar again before he leapt down from the battlewagon and began to stride towards Wozgul, brandishing the tool like a club, Go on cripple, try and run. I dare ya." he said but Wozgul simply picked up another rock and hurled it at the advancing Ork. This time the rock missed its target and landed on the ground behind him.

The other Ork snarled at this and continued to stride towards Wozgul with his crowbar held ready to be used as a club. Wozgul now stood and watched, waiting until the moment that the approaching Ork raised his crowbar above his head ready to strike and it was clear to Wozgul how much larger than himself his

opponent was. However, this just made the other Ork an easier target as Wozgul suddenly reached behind his back and pulled his slugga from his belt, pointing it upwards under the other Ork's chin and his eyes widened in surprise right before Wozgul pulled the trigger. The single bullet blew the back off the larger Ork's skull before he could do anything to try and defend himself and he collapsed in a heap at Wozgul's feet. Wozgul knew that he did not have time to stop and search the body for teeth or other valuables since the last Ork inside the battlewagon could not have failed to have heard the gunshot and he pointed his slugga towards the hatchway as he started to move towards it.

"Wot's goin' on out dare?" the final Ork called out before he appeared in the hatchway and immediately saw Wozgul pointing his slugga towards him.

Wozgul fired as soon as he saw the last Ork but he was able to duck back into the battlewagon out of sight in time to avoid being hit by the bullet. Wozgul moved as quickly as he could on his crutch towards the hatchway and he fired again when he thought he saw movement but again hit only the side of the battlewagon.

The final Ork inside the battlewagon leant through the hatchway for a few moments and fired several rapid shots that made Wozgul throw himself to the ground before he fired again, pulling the trigger of his weapon repeatedly until the magazine was empty and he began to reload. The Ork inside the battlewagon saw his opportunity while Wozgul was fumbling with a spare magazine and he fired his own slugga only to miss Wozgul by a narrow margin and when he pulled the trigger again there was only a 'click'. Snarling, the last Ork tossed the weapon aside and broke into a sprint towards Wozgul who aimed his own slugga at him only to have it kicked from his hand before he could shoot. Then he lunged at Wozgul and pushed him flat to the ground before punching him in the face.

"Wotcha gonna do now cripple?" the Ork said, snarling at him, "Ya is barely more dan a runt and now ya gonna pay."

"An 'undred teef." Wozgul said and the Ork pinning him down frowned.

"Wot?" he said.

"An 'undred teef. I is gonna pay an 'undred teef to be strong and I'll 'ave some of 'em out of ya own mouth."

Wozgul replied as he slid his knife from its sheath before driving it into the side of the final Ork's head.

With the knife lodged in the side of his head the Ork got up and staggered backwards with a look of confusion on his face. Then he reached for the knife's grip and pulled it from his head, causing a sudden spurt of blood to erupt from the wound. He held the knife in front of him for a moment and stared at it before he suddenly fell forwards and landed face down on ground.

Wozgul now began to work quickly, ripping the teeth from their mouths and emptying the contents of their money pouches before placing them all in a bag with the ones he had taken from the Ork in the undergrowth. However, before he could then search the bodies for any other valuables he saw a pair of Gretchin approaching and one of them pointed at him before both turned and fled. Wozgul knew that this meant he had been discovered and there would soon be more Orks coming to investigate. Rather than risk confronting them all he picked up the teeth that he had gathered and got back to his feet before starting to flee as quickly as he could.

The Orks he expected to come and investigate did not take long to arrive and Wozgul looked back to see a group of at least a dozen led by a larger nob. He had a considerable head start over these Orks and he turned around again, moving as quickly as he could and expecting them to come charging after him at any moment. However, the Orks seemed reluctant to leave the battlefield and all the valuable scrap there. Instead all that came after Wozgul were shouts.

"We knows who ya is ya cripple!" the nob bellowed at him as he continued to hobble away, "We'll be lookin' for ya after dis, ya can count on it!"

"Is dey enough?" Wozgul asked when the mekboy was done counting out the teeth that he had brought him on his workbench. Many of the teeth still had blood on them but no Ork would ever question this, teeth were teeth after all and as long as they were proper Ork teeth they would be accepted in payment anywhere.

"Oh yeah lad, dey is enough. One hundred and forty-six teef. I'll take good care of ya for dat." the mekboy replied with a smile and then he turned to one of his Gretchin assistants, "Go and fetch da doc. Tell 'im dat our patient got da teef and is waitin' for us."

When Wozgul started to come around he knew that something was different. He was still largely in the dark except for a narrow slit directly ahead of his eyes that enabled him to see the workshop that he was still inside and from this he could tell that he was aligned vertically as if standing up. Trying to move his arms and legs he discovered that he was immobilised somehow and he could feel clamps around parts of his limbs.

"Wot's 'appeninin'?" he said and he heard his voice echo. It was clear that he was inside some kind of container that was just large enough to contain him but Wozgul could not tell exactly what it was.

"Ah, ya is awake." the voice of the mekboy said from somewhere outside the narrow area that Wozgul could see and moments later his face appeared right in front of the slot, peering into it.

"Wot 'appened? Where am I?" Wozgul said.

"Ang on a mo lad. I'll just start ya up and den ya'll see it." the mekboy said before he disappeared from view again. Wozgul then heard the sound of a pull chord and the spluttering of an engine trying to start. However, nothing happened and the mekboy spoke again, "Oi runt, pass us a number four." he said to one of his Gretchin and there was the sound of movement before there was a sudden loud 'clang' as something struck the side of the container that Wozgul seemed to be trapped inside. This was repeated a few moments later before the pull chord was pulled again and this time there was a brief roaring as an engine came to life right behind Wozgul.

All of a sudden the inside of the container was lit up by a bulb set above Wozgul's head and in front of him he saw numerous dials. These all had labels that indicated that they were telling him the status of the engine that he could hear running behind him but there were also two that were labelled 'AMMO', both of which read empty. Looking further down he could see the restraints around his limbs were holding them into mechanical braces while his hands had grips to hold that had triggers built into them, one on each hand operated by his index finger and another at the top of the grip where his thumb could press it. Wozgul squeezed these triggers and while nothing happened when he pulled the ones operated by his fingers there was a loud whirring sound when he pressed down with his thumbs. However, when he bent one of his arms to try and bring a grip closer to his face he heard the sound of motors running and through the vision slit Wozgul saw a large mechanical arm that was tipped with a circular blade waving in front of him. Pressing down with his thumb again Wozgul saw the blade begin to spin rapidly.

"Dat's good." the mekboy said, "Try walkin'."

"Walkin'?" Wozgul said.

"Yeah walkin'. Push down on one of dem pedals under ya feet lad." the mekboy told him.

"Okay den." Wozgul responded, not sure what trying to walk was supposed to achieve while he was stuck inside this strange container but as he his foot down he felt a pedal beneath it depress and heard more motors. At the same time he felt the container become unbalanced and start to fall sideways, prompting Wozgul to lift hit foot again at which point he heard a heavy 'thud' and the container stopped falling. Wozgul then smiled as he realised what was happening.

The mekboy had sealed Wozgul inside the body of a dreadnought, a bulky walking machine equipped with a pair of huge arms tipped with lethal blades while a paired of ranged weapons were also mounted to the body, in this case the ammunition counters suggested that these were belt fed automatic weapons. Wozgul suddenly thought about the power this gave him. No longer was he a weakling cripple who was an easy target for any other Ork or even mobs of Gretchin, now he was stronger than all but the largest Orks and the thick armour plating that now encased his body made him almost entirely invulnerable to attack.

This made Wozgul laugh out loud, the sound echoing inside the confines of the dreadnought and he pressed down on the pedals beneath his feet alternately to take several steps ahead.

"Dat's da way lad." the mekboy said, "Da 'arder ya press, da bigger da step ya'll take."

Wozgul tried varying the size of the steps he took and quickly found that he could use this to steer the dreadnought as well by taking longer steps with one leg than the other. Then his thoughts turned to the Orks who had yelled at him as he fled. Their leader had promised to find Wozgul and exact revenge for the deaths of the three Ork scavengers but now Wozgul considered hunting him down instead. Turning the dreadnought until he saw the exit from the mekboy's workshop Wozgul strode towards it, laughing out loud as he swung his arms and smashed anything he walked past while Gretchin workers panicked and fled out of his path. Then he simply thrust both arms forwards when he got close to the exit and reduced the large wooden doors to splinters before walking out into the street.

"Boss should ya not do somethin' to stop 'im?" one of the mekboy's Gretchin servants said as he emerged from beneath a workbench and looked around. Unlike the Gretchin the mekboy himself had simply stood back and watched as Wozgul stormed out of the workshop and now there cries of panic along with the sound of some small arms fire coming from outside as the new dreadnought ran amok.

"Nah." the mekby replied, "E'll be back. Every kan just needs a bit of runnin' in, dat's all."