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NECROPOLIS

2350

ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM

SCIENCE FICTION HORROR ADVENTURE



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ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM

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THE LAST WORD

WAR MASTER'S NOTES

Welcome to *The Last Word*, a standalone scenario written for the *Necropolis* campaign setting.

If you intend to play in this adventure, you should **stop reading now**. Advanced knowledge of the scenario will only spoil your enjoyment of the game.

The WM should read the entire adventure before play begins. Knowing the basic flow and details in advance will greatly speed up play and make the game run smoother.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

You also need a copy of the *Savage Worlds* rulebook and the *Necropolis: 2350* Savage Setting. The *Necropolis* Figure Flats are recommended, though any suitable sci-fi or dark future miniatures will suffice.

CHARACTERS

This adventure is designed for a squad of four Knights from any of the core Sacri Ordines. The adventure is designed for Knights with 40–55 XPs (Veteran Rank), though lower-experienced characters should be able to cope if they use their brains. Use the archetypes from the *Necropolis 2350* setting book if you need pre-generated characters. Each archetype has been designed as a starting character. Those used should be advanced as the player wishes to bring them up to 45 XPs.

For larger groups or more experienced characters, the WM needs to adjust the number and stats of opponents appropriately to create an exciting challenge.

EXTRAS

Guarding the shrine is a Lance of Sisters of Bradamante, a militant order of nuns. There is a total number of Sisters equal to that of the player

characters. Sister Superior Freemont, their commanding officer, is a Wild Card and the rest are Extras. Stats can be found on page 16.

Text in the adventure assumes four Sisters are present. GMs will have to alter any text for greater or lesser numbers of Sisters. Should there be more than six, their cells contain bunks rather than single cots.

Note that each Sister except Freemont has a special talent, which must be determined randomly by the GM. Roll this and a personality trait (Freemont is automatically Heroic) before the adventure begins and fill out one Ally Record Sheet for each Sister. When indicated in the adventure, the Sisters' Ally sheets should be handed out at random among the player characters. Until that time they are GM-controlled characters.

There is also a number of recruitment Sergeants (p. 19) equal to the player characters. Although quite inept in combat, the GM should fill out an Ally Sheet for each one and hand them to the players—all guns matter in war. Roll a random personality trait for each one.

CHARACTER DEATH

In any adventure involving combat there is a chance of character death. Should a Wild Card die, the character can take any allied Extra and promote him or her to Wild Card status for the remainder of this mission or play Sister Superior Freemont as his sole character once the Sisters' sheets are handed out (until then she remains an NPC).

At the end of the mission, the player creates a new character as normal, gaining Experience Points earned during the adventure for his new character (so his new character doesn't lose out).

ACT 1: MEETING THE HOSTS

Begin the adventure by reading aloud the Tactical Briefing (page 19) or handing out copies to the players to read themselves.

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Remember to give the players Player Handout #2 and the Update sheet during the briefing, as these contain important information.

SCENE 1: A SHAKY START

Once the Lance is ready, they are driven to the Angel dropship, whereupon they meet the recruiting Sergeants assigned to the mission. Once everyone is aboard the Angel takes off and begins its journey. If the players want to banter while en route to the shrine, let them—it's a good way to introduce the Sergeants' personalities in play and gives the players a chance to voice their opinions on what the mission might entail.

On arrival at the town, read aloud the following text.

The voice of the pilot crackles over your headset communicators. "Looks like any hope of a quiet mission is out of the question." The screen by your commander's seat flickers into life, showing the town and landing field as the pilot begins his final maneuvers.

Although the image is grainy, you can make out a vast throng of people crowding the town streets, congregating most thickly around a large Gothic structure—no doubt the shrine. Further out, the perimeter of the landing strip is ringed with onlookers. As the dropship approaches, people begin pointing toward it and cheering. A Prophet APC can be seen moving across the airfield toward one of the landing pads.

The Angel hits the pad with a slight bump, and the pilot lowers the ramp. As you clamber out across the various boxes of merchandizing material, the APC draws to a halt nearby. An attractive woman climbs out of the passenger door, her light armor glinting in the sun and a flechette SMG slung over her soldier. With the aid of a spear used as a walking stick, she limps over to your position.

"I'm Sister Superior Freemont," she says, with no hint of friendship in her voice. "Your presence has attracted the usual gathering of supporters and detractors, so it was decided you'd travel to the shrine via Prophet. Load your gear in the back."

As she gestures to the APC, another woman, similarly clad in armor, emerges from the driver's door and leans against the front of the APC.

Sister Superior Freemont then scans each of the Knights' and Sergeants' ID tags into her ID scanner for security purposes. If the Knights'

commanding officer does not do the same with the Sisters' tags, she requests he does so immediately to avoid friendly fire incidents in the event of trouble.

Shortly after the scans are complete, loud sounds of arguing can be heard from near the APC. One of the Sergeants is shouting at the driver, who seems to be making matters worse by ignoring his complaints. Upon investigating (Sister Superior Freemont investigates if the Knights don't) the Knights discover the Sergeant ordered the Sister to help load boxes onto the APC, an order she flatly refused.

Let the Knights sort out the disagreement. The Update sheet makes it clear the Sisters are not members of the Ordines. However, if necessary have the Knights make Common Knowledge rolls. Success means they know the Sisters are under no obligation to follow any orders given by a member of the Ordines while operating under their own mandate and commander. The Sisters may be armed, but they are nuns, not soldiers, and thus answer to ecclesiastical authorities in this situation, not military ones.

At some point during the problem-solving exercise Freemont speaks up. Use the first section of text if the Knights back the Sergeant and request the Sister helps their men. The second box should be read if the Knights rebuke the Sergeant and remind him of his position.

"Look, commander," she says, "we have to work together for a few days, but let's draw the lines here and now. The Sisters are not part of the military structure. We're not here to answer to your requests unless combat occurs. Our sole duty is protect Mother Agnes and the shrine. Driving here to collect you was a courtesy, not a sign of subservience. As for the boxes, get your troops to load them—we've got to get back to the shrine, with or without you and your materiel. Are we both clear on where we stand?"

"At least you know where the line is drawn," Freemont says. "If a fight breaks out, we'll fall under your command as senior military commander. Until then, our only duties are to protect Mother Agnes and the shrine. Just make sure all your troops understand that and we'll get along fine for the few days you're here."

When the boxes and troops are loaded, the APC heads off through the crowd gathered outside the airfield and into town. The short journey takes an hour, due to the crowds. Finally, the APC enters through the gates of the shrine and into the relative calm of the outer compound.

SCENE 2: ARRIVAL AT THE SHRINE

Saint Malachy's shrine is a squat, irregular-shaped structure of typical Church Gothic design. Its dark gray, stone walls are far from welcoming in appearance, and the atmosphere within the precinct is a somber one. After vacating the APC, Freemont points to areas around the courtyard. Indicate the areas Freemont points out to the players using an unlabelled map or areas on the tabletop.

"Over there is where you can set up your stand. The gates open at dawn tomorrow, and believe me, this place will get crowded very quickly. One of my Sisters will be with Mother Agnes at all times, one guarding the shrine, and another on the gate. I'll be around as necessary to help maintain order where needed.

"That door," she indicates a door in side of the shrine, "is where you'll be sleeping. It's usually the poorhouse, but we've had to move them elsewhere during your visit." Her voice makes it clear she did not approve of this action. "There are two basic sleeping areas and a communal washroom. Keys are inside—don't lose them or you'll be fined. Meals are available in the main refectory. I'll give you a quick tour after you've had the chance to unpack.

"The shrine is protected by a basic security system. I can link my mobile command center into any of the security cameras, which are concealed around the site. Restricted doors are protected by id scanners and alarm systems—the others just have regular locks. The shrine itself is protected by infrared beams linked to silent alarms, which patch through to our headset comms gear. Trip the alarms and the shrine area seals off automatically. Unless Mother Agnes declares otherwise, your id tags won't be cleared for secure areas.

"I have some paperwork to complete. I'll meet you back here in two hours for a tour and introduction to Mother Agnes."

With that she limps into the main shrine, while the driver maneuvers the now-empty APC into a nearby garage.

The sleeping quarters and washroom are indeed very basic. Eight hard wooden cots, with woolen blankets and pillows seemingly stuffed with rocks, are crammed into each sleeping area. At the foot of each cot is a small trunk for storing personal items. The washroom has

two toilets, four sinks, and a communal shower cubicle, capable of holding four at a time. There is no hot water available (though enterprising Knights may be able to jury rig a simple heating system). As Freemont said, there is a set of twin keys in each sleeping area—one key opens the outer door and the other the sleeping chambers (both barracks use the same key).

SCENE 3: A BRIEF TOUR

Exactly two hours later, Freemont enters the courtyard from the shrine. She does not go to the barracks to fetch the Knights, expecting them to be present when she arrives. She doesn't comment on tardiness, but she does give the characters disparaging looks if they are late.

The tour is brief and takes in the main shrine, chapel, library, crypts, and shop, in that order. She indicates the doors to the Sisters' quarters but does not allow the Knights to enter. Likewise, she mentions there is a secure armory in the shrine, but unless pressed hard by the Knights, she does not reveal its location to them.

The shrine, the centre of attraction at the site, comprises a toughened bulletproof glass case (Toughness +14) surrounding a gem-encrusted, gold casket about 12" to a side and 8" tall. The casket sits on a purple velvet cushion. Freemont explains that in the morning the casket will be opened, and the skull of Saint Malachy will be placed on top for the pilgrims to see.

The aim of the tour is simply to give the Knights a general overview of the areas likely to be visited by the public tomorrow, just in case their assistance is required. Other areas may become used as the scenario develops.

SCENE 4: MOTHER AGNES

Freemont knocks on the door, pauses for a moment, and then enters, beckoning the Knights to follow.

"Mother Agnes," Freemont says, her head bowed slightly, "these are the Knights who will be recruiting outside the shrine tomorrow. Knights, this is Mother Agnes, keeper of the shrine of Saint Malachy."

Seated behind a wooden desk is a wizened woman wearing blue robes. She rises slowly and slightly unsteadily to her feet and stares at each of you in turn. Her bright grey eyes seem to pierce your very soul with their intensity, rooting out every

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minor sin you have ever committed. Each of you feels a flicker of relief as her eyes move on from you, for though it's obvious she is extremely frail in body, the willpower of the elderly nun is immense.

"Welcome to the shrine of Saint Malachy," she whispers. "I hope your mission tomorrow is profitable." With that she sits down again.

Mother Agnes is content to answer questions, though she has an intense dislike of frivolity and time wasting. Saint Malachy is naturally her favored subject. Given the near-unlimited questions which could be asked, no answers are given here. GMs should use the background notes and common sense when formulating answers.

Agnes is also interested in the activities of the Sacri Ordines and interrogates the Knights about their service. She has a keen eye for body language and is a good judge of character—attempts to impress her with tales of bravery or outright lies are doomed to failure, and she will call the Knight on any obviously erroneous facts. She's interested in the men behind the tales, not barrack room bravado and war stories.

When the questioning is over, read the following text to the players.

Freemont gestures to you to say any farewells and leave. Once outside she says, "Mother Agnes tires easily these days. Sometimes I feel it is only her willpower and devotion to Saint Malachy that keeps her going. Until tomorrow morning you are free to do as you wish, though I believe your orders prohibit you from leaving the precinct. The chapel is available to you for prayers. The evening meal will be served in an hour in the refectory. You'll be escorted there, around the back of the shrine."

ACT 2: RECRUITMENT DAY

As dawn breaks over the town, whether the Knights are ready or not, Mother Agnes appears at the main shrine doors and walks slowly to the gates, outside which are thousands of cheering pilgrims. Sister Superior Freemont and two other Sisters walk just behind her, their eyes scanning the crowd, their guns ready for instant use. (The Sister guarding the shrine is already at her station.)

Agnes gives a short speech, welcoming the pilgrims to the shrine and wishes each of them a successful pilgrimage. She then walks back into the shrine with her bodyguard. Only when she is safely inside are the gates opened and



the pilgrims allowed entrance. Sister Superior Freemont hangs around outside until the procession of pilgrims is well underway, then makes her way inside to oversee events in the shrine.

Despite the fervor running through the excited crowd, the procession is generally orderly. There is some pushing and shoving and a few impatient shouts from those further back, but nothing the Sisters on duty can't handle with a few well-chosen words.

Pilgrims enter the shrine along the right-hand side of the path, passing by the Knights' recruiting table, and enter the corridor leading to the shop. From here, they enter the shrine and walk counter clockwise around the reliquary and into the chapel. After praying, they leave the building by going back through the shrine and out the main doors, keeping to the clear side of the path.

SCENE 1: WE HAD SOME MINOR INCIDENTS...

The first part of the adventure deals with a series of random events centered on the Knights as they try to secure new recruits. The order in which these occur can be chosen by the GM or rolled randomly. GMs should also feel free to create a few encounters of their own. How many the GM uses is really up to the players, the sorts of gaming they like, and how much they are enjoying the game. Groups with a strong desire for combat should only have one or two scenes, whereas those who enjoy roleplaying their characters may be happy to run through a half dozen or more.

GMs can reroll duplicate events or modify them. For instance, the armchair general may, if sent packing by a Knight's superior knowledge of tactics, return with a new theory to bore the characters. Maybe another family wants photos. This time the lone-parent mother tries to bribe the Knights to take her kids, a rude and unruly pair, off her hands and deliver them to the Ordo's orphanage (possibly prompting a stern lecture on family values from a Knight).

After each cameo, each of which is set about an hour apart, have every Knight make a Persuasion roll. Success means they persuade one person to go talk to the recruiting Sergeants. A raise nets them 1d4 potential recruits. Keep a record of the total and halve the final number. This is how many new recruits actually sign up to join an Ordo. About half these join the main Ordo the Knights serve and the other half elect to enlist with rival Ordines. Feel free to reward

UPDATE: SELLING RELICS

The selling or purchase of holy relics, or fraudulently selling items as holy relics, is considered a major sin by the Third Reformation Church and is punishable by 3-12 years hard labor, plus confiscation of any relics in the perpetrator's possession. Selling holy relics to a heretic (or even just giving them away) carries a sentence of death by burning. When Inquisitors are involved, a trial is considered optional and pleas of, "I didn't know he was a heretic" carry no weight.

Citizens who discover a relic, or an item which could be classified a relic, are rewarded by the Church, but only with absolution of past temporal sins (it doesn't grant the citizen a guaranteed place in Heaven). Relics fall under the jurisdiction of the Office of Relics, a sub office of the Office of Antiquities (see the adventure, *The Long Sleep* for details).

Shrines are allowed to sell replicas of relics to raise income, but must clearly state their mundane nature.

the Knights with an extra Experience Point if they manage to actually recruit new members equal to two-thirds of the events used (i.e. if you use 6 events, they need to recruit 4 or more new soldiers to earn the bonus).

In addition, for each person who talks to the Sergeants, the Knights receive donations equal to several thousand miters. These aren't from the potential recruits, but from the pilgrims in general.

Once the cameos have been dealt with the adventure proper begins—the cameos partly serve to disguise the first major event as merely another routine incident, rather than having it stand out as special as soon as it is announced.

d10 Event

- 1 **Old Friend:** One or more Knights meet an old friend. The buddy may be from the same school or neighborhood, or perhaps be a former Knight who left through injury or crisis of faith. What he has been doing since he last saw the character(s) is up to the GM and may be interesting

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("Yeah, I stopped jacking cars. I'm a priest now") or rather mundane ("Hey, being a farmer isn't all bad").

- 2 **Potential Assassin:** Have each Knight make a Notice roll while surveying the passing pilgrims. Whoever rolls highest spots what looks like a pistol sticking out from a youth's jacket. It is in fact a paintball gun the kid intends on using after he finishes his pilgrimage. Use citizen stats for the youth.

Knights who shoot first and ask questions later must answer to Mother Agnes first and then their superior officer back at the Preceptory. How they handle the incident may lead to wild applause from the pilgrims (nonlethal means) or boos and jeers (another casualty of war).

Sister Superior Freemont comes to investigate any disturbance. She speaks to the Sister at the gate, who had already checked the youth, a local lad of very good character and strong faith, and noticed the gun for what it was. She was under no compulsion to tell the Knights, who aren't responsible for security. Freemont gives the Knights a lecture on areas of responsibility if they start kicking up a fuss.

- 3 **My Plan Was Better:** The armchair general the briefing officer warned the Knights about makes an appearance. He's a real nerd and has never been within 1000 miles of a battle, but he knows his theory. He launches into a blow-by-blow account of how he would have led the Battle of New Budapest and secured victory weeks earlier and with fewer losses. Have each Knight make a Spirit roll. Those who fail suffer a level of Fatigue from boredom for the next two hours.

The only way to get rid of the armchair general is to beat him in an opposed Knowledge (Battle) roll, to show him the error in his great plan. He has a skill of d10 (theoretical only—he'd panic in combat and be of no use). One roll can be made each hour.

- 4 **Shoot Me, Please:** Meeting an old friend is one thing, but one of the characters has an encounter with someone he never expected to see here—his mother. This can be played seriously, with the mother being genuinely concerned about her son's

welfare, or more for laughs, with the mother henpecking her son over his sloppy dress, slouching stance, strange friends, gaunt looks, slight paunch, or whatever other imaginary issue the GM wishes to invent.

- 5 **Sign Him Up:** A young lad of 18 years slips out of line to talk to the Knights. After a few minutes have each Knight make a Common Knowledge roll. With success, they realize the kid knows his stuff, and is able to discuss their weaponry, not in some post-adolescent fan boy way, but with a solid, practical grasp of the hardware's strengths and weaknesses.

Problem is, the kid doesn't actually want to join the Sancti Ordines—he's already lost two brothers and an uncle in the war. Convincing him to enlist requires a Persuasion roll at -4 and only one roll is allowed. With success, he signs his life away. Next time they hear of the kid is a year later, when they learn of his death during an ambush.

- 6 **A Real Assassin:** The Sister at the gate suddenly cries out, "Assassin!" and points toward a young man in the crowd as she readies her SMG. The man, a Necrolatrist hiding among the pilgrims who had hoped to kill Mother Agnes, draws a gun and aims it at the Knights (any Church target is better than none). Deal initiative cards at this point for the Knights and the Sister on duty (pick one at random, except Sister Superior Freemont).

Treat him as a Wild Card assassin but armed only with a 6mm pistol (2 mags) and two monofilament grenades. The courtyard is packed—two solid lines of citizens, one entering and one exiting, line the path between the gate and the shrine. Civilian casualties lead to a strong reprimand back at the Preceptory and give a -4 penalty to the next Persuasion rolls to recruit new blood.

Security is stepped up a notch after the incident—Freemont joins the guard at the gate and Mother Agnes' guard carries a shield, using it to protect the elderly nun from potential attackers. No amount of arguing can convince Mother Agnes to halt

the pilgrimage—cultists wanting her dead are just a fact of life she must live with.

- 7 **Medic!:** One of the Sergeants (picked at random or based on a suitable personality trait, such as Lazy) commits a potentially fatal error in judgment. He accidentally leaves his flechette pistol close to the replicas.

A woman picks up the gun and pulls the trigger (while shouting bang—civilians seem to think all guns go bang), thinking it to be a fake, at her boyfriend, who is seriously injured as a flechette rips through his neck. The Knights, alerted by the screaming, have one chance at a Healing roll to save the man's life. How they deal with the Sergeant is up to them.

- 8 **Smile for the Camera:** A rich family (mother, father, two young kids) come across to the Knights after leaving the shrine and asks if they can take some photos of their kids posing. Unfortunately, the photos seem to go on forever, with shots of the kids carrying guns, posing with Knights, wearing camouflage paint, and such like. Think of them as really excited tourists.

Asking the kids if they want to join up when older gets a rather rude response. With a serious face, the young daughter turns to the Knights and says, "No way! Daddy says only retards and the poor join the military! I'm going to work in a bank and marry a rich man." The father, totally embarrassed by his offspring's outburst, quickly ushers the family on their way. Being rude to the family gives the next recruitment roll a -2 penalty.

- 9 **You're His Father!:** A young woman carrying a baby suddenly leaps out of line and thrusts the kid at the nearest Knight. Through tears (false) she claims the Knight is the baby's father and deserted her after a one-night stand (no pun intended).

The woman is slightly deranged, though harmless, and is known to the local authorities, having pulled this stunt several times before with complete strangers. Convincing her, and the startled pilgrims, the Knight isn't the father, requires a Persuasion roll at -2 (and ideally some roleplaying).

With success she snatches the baby back and joins the queue as if nothing had happened. On a failure she tries to run away into the crowded street, leaving the Knights with a young infant whose diaper needs an urgent change if she is successful. Treat her as a civilian.

Local police, if informed of the incident, take the child away and call in Family Services to deal with the mother. There's a good chance the child will end up in a Church orphanage, so the Knights may wish to arrange for him to be sent to an Ordo orphanage instead.

- 10 **Crazy Woman:** A female pilgrim stumbles from the shrine and collapses in a heap in the courtyard. When given basic medical attention she recovers, babbles, "It's not real. He told me! It's not real," rises shakily to her feet, and makes her way out of the precinct. If stopped and questioned, she merely repeats what she said before, only louder. This occurs *ad infinitum*.

The woman received a vision from Saint Malachy, informing her of events which will soon become apparent to the Knights. Unfortunately, the experience has left her temporarily dazed and confused.

SCENE 2: ...AND THEN THE REAL TROUBLE STARTED

This scene ends the pilgrimage, so the GM should ensure all the cameos he wants to use are dealt with first.

Inside the shrine, the skull of Saint Malachy is on display behind its bulletproof screen. From outside, the Knights hear a child shout, followed by a cacophony of screams and shouts. The loud crack of a stun grenade signals something very bad has happened.

On entering the shrine, the Knights discover a riot in progress. Several citizens stagger around stunned by the grenade, but many others are pushing and banging on the glass, while Mother Agnes and her bodyguard have been pushed back into a corner by the angry mob. The Sister has her shield covering Agnes, but this leaves her exposed to kicks and punches.

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Hand out the stats for *one* Sister to the players. The other Sisters join the fray if the characters summon them or if Mother Agnes is taking a beating. Under no circumstances should she be Incapacitated, let alone killed.

The Knights now have a dilemma. The citizens are rioting, endangering a holy relic, and threatening a member of the Church, but they are unarmed civilians. A massacre will not go down well (a trip to the Penitents is the likely outcome of any inquiry—and one will be launched). Unfortunately, flechette weapons are virtually silent, so firing into the air won't get anyone's attention.

Calming the riots can be achieved a number of ways. First, the Knights can take out half the number. This can be achieved by nonlethal means (such as punches or baton grenades), stun grenades, or killing them. Second, they can try to shout or talk them down. Only a single roll is allowed, though it can be a Cooperative roll. Intimidation rolls have a –2 penalty, whereas Persuasion suffers a –4 penalty.

Hardcore Rioters (4): Treat as civilians, but they are unarmed and Berserk (see *Necropolis*).

Rioters (16): Treat as civilians, but they are unarmed (see *Necropolis*).

WHAT HAPPENED?

Once the riot is over, the Sisters quickly assume control. The pilgrims in the building are lead or carried outside, and the shrine doors are closed. The main gates are also closed, leaving the rioters trapped in the courtyard (for questioning). Sister Superior Freemont addresses the crowd outside the gates, by now becoming agitated, and spins a story of “religious fervor” and “closing the shrine for a short while to allow passions to cool.”

The Sister on duty in the shrine at the time tells the Knights that a child pointed at the skull and shouted something. Suddenly the crowd around the reliquary strengthened, and then the riot broke out. All she can recall is hearing phrases like, “It’s not real!” and “They’ve lied!”

Investigating the skull through the glass requires a Notice roll at –2. With success, the Knight discovers a small hole (just a fraction of an inch across) in the back of the head. A Common Knowledge roll indicates the hole could have been made by a flechette.

Mother Agnes allows the Knights to investigate the skull in more detail, but only if they wear gloves. Sister Superior Freemont deactivates the alarm system and opens the lock

using her ID tag. Closer inspection allows the Notice roll at no penalty. Removing a flechette from a magazine to compare sizes isn’t possible due to the way the magazines are loaded. However, firing a single shot into something relatively soft (such as the cushion on which the casket sits) produces a near-intact flechette. It’s a perfect fit!

Mother Agnes is shocked to her core and collapses to the floor. After waking (a Healing roll can do this in a few minutes with smelling salts), she orders the shrine closed down until further notice and orders Freemont and the Knights to launch a full investigation. She also states that she checked the skull just last week in minute detail and noticed nothing untoward.

Questioning the rioters doesn’t reveal a lot of interest. A child spotted the hole and someone (an ex-Sergeant) quickly explained it was a flechette injury, something an ancient relic could not have. Religious fervor then spilled over into anger and the riot ensued.

Freemont orders the rioters arrested and locked in the Knights’ barracks (after they have cleared out their gear). The local authorities are not yet informed of the situation, both Agnes and Freemont wishing to keep the news of the skull being a fake secret until the truth of the matter has been deduced.

SCENE 3: THE INVESTIGATION

Hopefully, a Knight recalls Sister Superior Freemont’s earlier comments about the security system and advises they check the recent security logs. Should they not, Freemont makes the suggestion.

If asked, Freemont says she knows of only one visitor in the last week, Father Superior Turman Fitzgerald, the head of a small monastic order whose monastery is located on the end of town. Freemont reveals Father Superior Fitzgerald visits every year just before the pilgrimage to worship in private and pay his respects to the saint. He and Mother Agnes have known each other for many years.

Five cameras cover the shrine. Scrolling back through the various recordings reveals just one visitor who entered the shrine area—the Father Superior. He is escorted in by Sister Marie-Nicole. The recordings show the elderly man and Sister walk across to the shrine.

The monk then whispers something to Sister Marie-Nicole, who promptly uses her ID tag to deactivate the alarms and open the case. Father Superior Fitzgerald then opens the

casket and removes the skull, which he places in his robes, and replaces it with another. The Sister then secures the case and reactivates the alarm. A further ten minutes shows the monk seemingly at prayer before leaving, escorted again by the Sister.

A character making a Notice roll realizes the monk's face is only clearly visible from one of the cameras—from the others he is concealed by the Sister, the shrine, or his hood. Freemont (who discovers this if the Knights don't) states that the camera they are viewing was installed only two weeks ago and in secret—only Freemont and Mother Agnes knew of its existence. If questioned about this, Freemont says it is standard practice before a major event to add extra cameras to increase security.

Should a character think to zoom in on the monk's face, have the Knights present make Notice rolls. With success, they spot the monk is smiling while praying. It isn't a warm smile, but rather one of victory. On a raise, a Knight detects a momentary flash of yellow across the Father Superior's eyes. Freezing that frame reveals not the eyes of a man, but something reptilian.

INTERROGATING THE SISTER

Freemont protests if the Knights demand to question Sister Marie-Nicole, claiming the security of the shrine is a matter for the Sisters. However, Mother Agnes rebukes her sternly, proclaiming the Sisters have failed in their sacred duty. With heavy heart, she turns the investigation over to the Knights, promising them whatever aid she and the Sisters can provide.

Freemont, through gritted teeth, asks if she can be present for the interrogation. The final decision rests with the senior Knight.

Rather than provide a pre-written speech from the Sister, her interrogation takes the form of likely questions and the nun's answers. During the interrogation the characters can make Notice rolls. Success reveals the Sister is telling the truth.

Q: What did Father Superior Fitzgerald say to you?

A: *"Nothing of note. He greeted me at the gate and asked if I was well. Then we entered the shrine, but nothing more was said until he bade me farewell."* [Showing her the tape causes the nun to frown and say, "I don't remember that at all. I swear, he never said a word in the shrine."]

Q: Why did you allow him to take the skull?

A: *"I didn't! No one is allowed to touch the Blessed Saint except Mother Agnes. Those are the rules of the shrine."* [Again, showing her the recording elicits a firm denial and total lack of memory.]

Q: Did Father Superior Fitzgerald seem different?

A: *"No, not at all. He was his usual polite self. He is a charming man, very devout and very proper in his ways."*

The Sister can't remember anything of the events because she was subjected to a version of the *puppet* litany. Under the command of the monk, she performed the deeds exactly as on the tape, and was then ordered to remember nothing untoward. As far as she is concerned, the monk came in, prayed silently, and left, the same as he does every year.

Breaking the mental block is possible, but it isn't easy. First, a character can try to perform a quick exorcism of whatever is blocking her memories (a *dispel* litany in game terms). The *puppet* spell has an arcane skill of d12 for this purpose and only a single roll is allowed. With success, the spell is broken and Sister Marie-Nicole's memories come flooding back, causing her to break down into loud sobs. After the nun calms down, she tells the Knights what happened—Fitzgerald asked her to deactivate the alarms and open the case, and then forget everything that happened.

Should *dispel* not be available, there is a ritual exorcism available, though it is difficult and not without danger. Instead of invoking a litany, the exorcist uses his own faith and willpower to break down the mental block by asking questions over and over, quoting scripture, staring into her eyes and locking wills with whatever is causing the memory loss, and looking for any chinks in the block. This involves a Faith roll at -2 opposed by a d12 roll.

With success, a thin black vapor escapes the Sister's lips and she begins sobbing. She then reveals the truth as above. On a failure, the poor chaplain catches a glimpse in Marie-Nicole's eyes of the Dark, causing him to make a Guts roll or suffer Terror. A critical failure gives a -2 penalty to the Guts roll. Whatever the outcome, the lengthy ritual is extremely draining, both mentally and physically. The character must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue for 24 hours.

It doesn't matter if the Knights learn the truth or not—they have enough evidence of his involvement in the theft to question the Father

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Superior. Should they make their intentions public, Mother Agnes pens a letter granting the Knights full authority in the investigation and stamps it with the shrine's seal as proof to the Father Superior of their status.

REINFORCEMENTS

The Knights may wish to procure reinforcements for their trip to the small monastery.

Sister Superior Freemont and the Sisters of Bradamante are extremely reluctant to leave the shrine. The crowd outside is still ugly, and whatever stole the skull may seek to return and finish off Mother Agnes. However, Freemont allows them full access to the Prophet and the armory.

Aside from a lot of flechette ammunition (assume 50 mags for every type of flechette weapon), the Sisters have six flechette pistols, a 25mm SBAC (with 2 magazines), 20 baton grenades, 20 stun grenades, 10 monofilament grenades, 10 HEAP grenades, a Maximus RGL (after 2352), and a dozen heartbreakers, donated to them by the Impalers.

The Sergeants whine loudly about being noncombatants, but orders are orders and they're not stupid enough to go against the Knights' demand. They continue to whine through the journey.

Outside reinforcements from the nearest nearby Preceptory are, in theory, a possibility, but the WM should try to avoid allowing this through plausible excuses. Perhaps there are simply no dropships available (due to an exercise, routine maintenance, or mass delivery run), bad weather has grounded all flights until further notice, or the local commander doesn't think tracking down a missing relic requires his troops.

ACT 3: MONASTERY OF THE DAMNED

Father Superior Fitzgerald isn't really the villain of the tale. It was his flesh which committed the crime, but not his soul. Always interested in the nature of the Rephaim, Fitzgerald acquired through dubious means several archaic volumes on the nature of demons. Alas, one of the books contained more than just speculation, and while reading a passage something from the Dark Dimension consumed him.

Armed with the monk's full memories, the fiend learned of the skull of Saint Malachy and its history. Seeing a potentially powerful tool

for the Dark's cause, it promptly stole the relic. Although it could easily have slaughtered the Sisters and Mother Agnes, it had no wish to instantly alert the authorities to the disappearance of the skull. Had it not been for a child, it would likely have been a year before the theft was noticed.

You can use the shrine map for the monastery. Instead of the shrine area, the monastery has a small church (with a separate chapel, still). This is where all the action takes place.

SCENE 1: THE TRUTH WILL OUT

The main church doors open to reveal the stench of a charnel house. Blood, blackened with age, clings to the walls and stains the tiled floor. Hanging in one corner are the corpses of a dozen monks, their skin missing, gaping wounds across their necks indicating the cause of death and the source of the gore. Each has been banged by his own intestines.

Time for Guts rolls. The Knights have seen worse sights on the battlefield, so those who fail suffer Fear while they remain in the monastery.

Seated on the altar (a blasphemous act, as the Knights know) is an elderly man wrapped in voluminous black robes. His left hand rests on a skull—the skull of Saint Malachy.

"You're earlier than I expected," the monk sneers. "I had hoped for more time to complete my quest, but, as you mortals say, the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry. I take it you have come for this?" It strokes its fingers across the skull.

"So strange an object, the bones of a mortal being, yet ones possessed of strange power." It lifts its hand and brings it crashing down toward the skull. A faction of an inch from the skull, the hand pauses, as if held back by some invisible force. "Material remains, yet ones impervious to physical destruction by anything I can summon, and I can summon a lot of power! Still, I can't allow you to reclaim it. You see, it spoke to me and I don't want you learning its secrets. Perhaps your weapons would have some effect."

With lightning reflexes, the hand clasps the skull and holds it in front of its body, darting it left and right, up and down. "Go on," it taunts, "fire your guns. Let's see if I can intercept your flechettes."

Knights looking to engage the monk immediately are met with a stern rebuke. The seated figure merely wags its finger and says, "How typical. You are faced with something you don't understand, so your first thought is to kill it. Surely the opportunity to ask questions and learn something about your enemy should be seen as a golden opportunity."

The fiend is stalling for time, though it will answer questions (such is its sheer arrogance). While it talks, it secretly animates the skinned monks. They join the battle one round after the combat begins (no matter how long that takes), assuming the Knights haven't topped and tailed them, of course. Questions the creature will answer are given below (along with its reply). On other matters it merely scoffs and refuses to answer.

Q: What is your name?

A: "Names are power. I think you may find this answer appropriate, though. My name is Legion, for we are many. If you want to live, you may call me Master!"

Q: What are you? Are you Rephaim?

A: "In your terminology, a demon would be the closest approximation. These creatures you call the Rephaim are nothing, mere pawns in the endless struggle. Since you claim you are the light, the Rephaim would be mere shadows. We are the darkness."

Q: How long have you been here?

A: "I have been here for a matter of weeks, but my kind has haunted the universe since time began. Your ancestors knew of us. Some worshipped us as gods, and rightfully so. Others called us demons and sought to barter with us. We are immortal and infinite. We witnessed the beginning of the universe, and we shall be its end."

Q: What do you want?

A: "Ah, now that is a simple question. Surely even a talking ape like you could guess at the answer. We want nothing more than the total extermination of all life, all existence."

Sooner or later someone is going to get trigger-happy. Maybe the Knights don't want to banter with a self-proclaimed demon, or perhaps the fiend grows tired and seeks to end the charade. The fleshy body of the monk has Toughness 5. When it takes its first wound (which actually causes the demon no injury), a dramatic transformation occurs. The skull is immune to any damage the Knights can cause, though they won't know this, of course.

The flechettes rip into the monk's flesh, spraying blood as they exit his shattered corpse. Rather than falling, the figure simply looks down and smiles. "Now let us play," it laughs.

The skin suddenly bulges and splits, a gigantic figure merging, writhing, twisting from the fleshy shell as if escaping imprisonment. It grows larger, rising to its cloven feet to reveal a towering, glistening black-scaled humanoid figure, with yellow eyes and huge, curved horns. Bony spines suddenly erupt from its arms and legs, while two bone blades slide from its forearms with a sickening, grinding noise. Green balefire crackles across its body as it rushes to attack!

Time for another Guts roll, only this time it's at -2 and those who fail suffer the effects of Terror. The demon, unable to return home to the Dark Dimension, and being arrogant enough to believe it is indestructible, fights to the death. Once the demon is destroyed, all its spells end. This also deactivates the zombie monks, who fall to the ground, lifeless.

After it takes its final wound, the demon manages to utter a few final words before dissolving into a cloud of black, sulfur-smelling dust. "My work is undone, but the shrine is no more!" it howls. "Commence the attack! Let their blood stain the shrine, forever!"

Back at the shrine, a squad of Ordo Tenebrae, summoned days ago by the demon and currently operating from a safehouse close to the shrine, begin an attack.

Demon: See page 17.

Rephaim Monks (12): See page 18.

ACT 4: SHOWDOWN AT THE SHRINE

When the Knights get within five miles of the shrine, their headset communicators burst into life.

"This is Sister Superior Freemont to all available Knights. The shrine of Saint Malachy is under attack. I repeat. We are under attack. Suspect Ordo Tenebrae Lance. Urgent assistance required. They are in the building! They are in the building!"

The Radio then goes silent, though the Knights can hear Freemont cursing as she lays down withering fire. The Knights can reach the shrine in just a few minutes at top speed. Out-

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side the main gates, which hang off their hinges (having been blown apart with monofilament grenades), are many dozen dead, dying, and injured civilians. The sounds of combat, grenade explosions and shouts, can be heard from within the shrine.

SCENE 1: FIREFIGHT!

Hand out the Sisters' Ally Sheet to the players (the GM controls Mother Agnes). The positions of the Sisters and Black Knights are as below. No one has yet taken any injuries. Deal initiative cards and let the combat begin.

Mother Agnes is in her bedroom, with Sister Superior Freemont in the office, using the door as Medium cover as she fires at two Ordo Tenebrae at the end of the corridor near the stores (Medium Cover from the door). Mother Agnes will use her miracles to defend the Sisters and shrine, but won't risk her life in a fruitless endeavor.

Sister Bernadette is crouching behind a sarcophagus (Heavy Cover) in the crypt, keeping a single Black Knight in the doorway to the chapel at bay (he has Medium Cover).

Sister Ophelia is pinned down in the furthest cell from the refectory (Medium Cover), firing from the doorway at two Dark Knights at the other end of the corridor.

Sister Marie-Nicole is in the library, prone (Heavy Cover) behind a fallen bookcase while firing at one Black Knight in the chapel doorway and the Ordo Tenebrae officer who is by the door that leads from the refectory (both have Medium Cover).

The Ordo Tenebrae soldiers are not rookies. Once they realize they are being attacked on tow fronts, they pull back to reform and fight from a defensible position. They make use of available Cover and Aim if the opportunity arises. They'll certainly use their grenades to maximum effectiveness, not caring if they injure their own men or not, so long as a larger number of foes are in the blast radius.

Once the battle is over, the Knights and Sisters can perform first aid on the wounded. All the Ordo Tenebrae Knights have a skull painted with the number 666 in blood red below on the left shoulder plate of their armor. They are members of the "Legion of Hell," an elite Ordo Tenebrae Banner trained to operate behind enemy lines and strike at a moment's notice. Now introduced, the Knights should encounter these fanatics again during your campaign.

Ordo Tenebrae Dark Knight (5): Page 18.

Ordo Tenebrae Officer (1): Page 18.

SCENE 2: SAINT MALACHY'S FINAL PROPHECY

Once the head is returned to its rightful place in the shrine, a distant yet strong voice can be heard echoing throughout the room.

"The rekindled candle shall be engulfed in darkness when the fallen angel to Salus comes and the black eye flickers. Men of purity shall fall and stand brother against brother in times to come. The one upon the throne shall reign eternal over a divided realm. The End of Days has come."

With a loud crack, the skull shatters into a hundred pieces. Saint Malachy, it seems, will speak no more.

Mother Superior Agnes falls to her knees, her hands locked in prayer, tears in her eyes. "At last I have heard his voice! I shall inform His Holiness of this prophecy at once. May God have mercy on us all."

The prophecy is *not* just random gibberish to confuse the players or force them to spend time trying to work it out—it points to a terrible future event. That event will be detailed in a future product.

UPDATE: SISTERS OF BRADAMANTE

Of all the orders of nuns on Salus, the Sisters of Bradamante (or Bradamantites) stand out as unusual.

HISTORY

The Sisters of Bradamante were created in 2342 by Papal Edict. Several cardinals, all opposed to the power given the Sacri Ordines, had long voiced concerns about male Knights guarding convents, claiming it would lead to "disciplinary problems." None of the Ordines were willing to split their forces along lines of sex, and most resented having to divert manpower away from the frontlines for this duty.

Never one to let his opponents have the final word, Pope John dutifully declared the Sacri Ordines were no longer responsible for the protection of convents. Before his opponents could congratulate themselves, he added that he was creating a new order of nuns, the militant Sisters of Bradamante, to fill that role instead. The Grand Masters put up token resistance, claiming any warriors of

the Church should be part of the Ordines, but secretly breathed a sigh of relief. In creating the Sisters, though, the Pope may have played into the hands of cardinals who want to see females formed into their own Sancti Ordo.

Bradamante, though a creation of literature, was described as the ideal warrior maiden—highly skilled, brave, and loyal. The Sisters serve the Church as protectors of its female-oriented sacred places. Efforts are focused on guarding shrines of female saints and convents. Many female senior Church figures use them as bodyguards even today, a direct snub against the Praetorians.

Bradamante supposedly had a magical lance. Unsurprisingly, many Impalers consider the Sisters almost part of their organization, and relations between the two factions are generally good.

TRAINING

Members are accepted from the laity or transfers from the five original Ordines. Current membership stands at just 5,000. Their forces are divided across Salus.

When a Sister joins the order, she undergoes a year of religious and military training, similar to that of Knights. Currently, the Sisters receive military training from Praetorian instructors. Those who fail to meet the grade are sent home. Those who stay become Novitiates and are closely watched for a further two years. During this time they are expected to perform the role of full Sisters, but are not required to take holy vows. Candidates who pass must decide to take their holy vows (identical to those of a Knight) or leave. Assuming she stays, the candidate receives the title of Sister.

Transferees undergo six months of religious training only before becoming Novitiates. They also lose a rank, beginning again at the bottom of the ladder.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

Although militant, the Sisters are nuns first and foremost, and thus have no Grand Master. Although always technically commanded by their Abbess, she was primarily a figurehead until recently.

Before 2351, Sisters answered to the cardinal in charge of the Office of Antiquities when it came to military matters, something which annoyed the Grand Masters, who saw this as placing military resources under civilian authority and a dangerous precedent. As of 2351, they officially answer to Grand Master

Adolphus Kesting of the Praetorians, a move seen as even worse than giving control to the archbishops. Kesting, however, wisely leaves the day-to-day running of the Sisterhood to their highest-ranking officer, Abbess Alicia Winters, a former Preacher, who has served in this role since their inception.

There are four actual ranks—Abbess (the head of the order), Mother Superior, Sister Superior, and Sister. The Abbess is commander of the Sisters, though technically subservient to Grand Master Kesting. Each one of Salus' archbishoprics (even the Union has Church shrines which need guarding) is commanded by a Mother Superior. Sister Superiors command a single Lance, having the same status and command responsibilities as a Senior Knight. Sisters are the rank-and-file members, equivalent to Knights. As a purely monastic order, albeit a militant one, there is no equivalent of Sergeants.

MILITARY STRUCTURE

The Sisters based their organization loosely on the Sacri Ordines. The smallest unit is the Lance, comprising 4-6 Sisters. As defenders of the Church, not aggressors, Sisters use only the roles of Chaplains, Combat Medics, Infantry, Infantry Support, and Vehicle Crew. A typical shrine is guarded by a single Lance. Convents and abbeys house up to six Lances, depending on their size and location.

All the Lances in an archbishopric form a Convent. The Sisters have never marshaled their forces into a cohesive force, and a Convent is considered an administrative formation, not a military one.

Military hardware is similar to that used by the Sacri Ordines, though they may not carry swords (they carry molecular daggers instead) and only wear light armor. The Sisters have access to Prophets and Nazareth tanks, but must rely on the Ordines for other military hardware.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

As a non-military force, the Sisters are forbidden from operating Commanderies or Preceptories. Likewise, they have no permanent convents or abbeys of their own, and thus may not collect tithes. Instead, they rely on a small budget from the Office of Antiquities, pilgrim donations, and funds from the Ordines. Convents and abbeys are quick to provide as much support as they can, especially in rural communities, where the Sisters, despite their low numbers, are often the only form of military power.

PLAYING A SISTER

Sisters are sometimes sent to serve with the Sancti Ordines when protection or liberation of Church property or female personnel is required and to gain combat experience. They can never command a mixed Ordo Lance, regardless of their rank, and must defer to the highest ranked Knight. Sisters use only the military roles listed above, but every Sister must have Spirit d6+ and Guts d6+, in addition to any other requirements.

A newly created character may either take the Praetorian's special training *or* elect to be a transferee and take an Ordo's training. Transferees must give up their sword. Characters who transfer, whether in play or as part of their background, may learn the Praetorian's abilities through the Sister of Bradamante Edge. They retain their Ordo's special training, but may not take the Ordo Edge of their former Ordo while serving with the Sisters, being removed from the special training and constant practice necessary to earn that bonus.

NEW EDGE

SISTER OF BRADAMANTE

Requirements: Novice, female

The character is a member of the Sisters of Bradamante and has received special training.

The character may take either the Bodyguard or Defensive Mentality special training of the Praetorians when she picks this Edge. Note this as Sister of Bradamante (Bodyguard) or (Defensive Mentality). This Edge may be taken more than once, thus allowing the hero to acquire both bonuses. These benefits are retained even if the Sister leaves the sisterhood. A serving Sister with both Praetorian special training benefits may take the Serve and Protect Edge as an advancement, ignoring the Praetorian requirement.

THE CAST



MOTHER SUPERIOR AGNES

Mother Superior Agnes has governed the Shrine of St. Malachy since it was founded in 2320. Wizeden with age, yet possessed of indomitable spirit, she accepts no breach of the rules regarding the shrine. She is a staunch supporter of the Pope, and was an early convert to the Third Reformation Church. In her time

she has caused several cardinals to back down from proposed changes to the shrine's running, much to the Pope's amusement. Dressing down heavily-armed Knights who breach the rules holds no fear for her.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d12+2, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d12, Guts d8, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (Church) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Taunt d8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 3; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Elderly, Lame (advanced old age), Loyal, Pacifist (Major), Stubborn, Vow (Major: holy vows)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor, Improved Tough as Nails, Master (Spirit), New Powers, Power Points, Strong-Willed

Powers: *Blessing, detect/conceal arcana, dispel, healing, stun* (25 PP)

Gear: Habit, rosary, walking stick

SISTERS OF BRADAMANTE



SISTER SUPERIOR CLARE FREEMONT

Sister Superior Freemont transferred from the Impalers, where she served with honors as a Senior Knight, three years ago, after a leg injury ruled her out of future frontline duty. The Sisters accepted her without question. Since then she has worked hard and received her promotion last year. She is very fond of Mother Superior Agnes, though she'd never tell the old girl that to her face. Her spear doubles as a walking stick.

Notes: Remove her Tactician Edge if a player character has the Edge.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8+2, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 7/8; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Heroic, Lame (old leg injury), Loyal, Mean, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Attractive, Block, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, Dodge, Face-to-Face, Hold the Line, Rank (Senior Knight equivalent), Rock and Roll, Sister of Bradamante (Bodyguard & Defensive Mentality), Tactician, Total Faith

Gear: Light armor (+4), flechette SMG with 3 mags (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 2, Auto), spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands), 2 stun grenades on belt (Range: 5/10/20, MBT, Vigor roll or Shaken), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2), binoculars, mobile command center, ID scanner, ID tag.

SISTER OF BRADAMANTE

Assuming there are four player characters, the three other Sisters are named Sister Bernadette, Sister Ophelia, and Sister Maria-Nicole. With more than four Knights, the GM must create more names.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9(4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Sister of Bradamante (Bodyguard: currently Mother Superior Agnes)

Gear: Light armor (+4), flechette rifle with 3 mags (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8+1, AP 2, Auto, 3RB), 5 baton grenades in GL (Range: 10/20/40, Damage: 2d10 nonlethal), 2 stun grenades on belt (Range: 5/10/20, MBT, Vigor roll or Shaken), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2), medpac, ID tag.

Specialties:

Each Sister has a particular specialty or talent, represented by an additional Edge. Roll a d8 for each Sister and consult the chart below. Do not reroll duplicates.

d8	Edge
1	Alertness
2	Brawny (Toughness 10(4))
3	Fleet Footed (Pace 8)
4	Grenade Launcher King
5	Hose 'Em Down (armed with flechette MG, 3 mags, 2 stun grenades, and molecular dagger)
6	Marksmanship
7	Medic (armed with flechette SMG, 3 mags, 2 stun grenades, and molecular dagger)
8	Rock and Roll

RECRUITING SERGEANT

The Sacri Ordines need constant recruits, and it's the job of marketing and recruitment sergeants to tempt the masses into enlisting. Few have any practical combat experience, though they are equipped with sidearms as standard. Smartly dressed and with silver tongues, Knights refer to these necessary links in the chain as "Slimes."

Notes: The Yellow Hindrance represents the Sergeants' general lack of combat experience and tendency to panic when faced with armed opposition.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d4, Streetwise d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Vow (Major: sacred vows), Yellow Edges: Charismatic

Gear: Flechette pistol with 1 mag (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, RoF 1, Shots 30, AP 2, Semi-Auto), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2), marketing materials



THE DEMON

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Necromancy d10, Notice d10, Stealth d6, Taunt d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 14(2)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Mean, Overconfident

Edges: Ambidextrous, Command, Improved Frenzy, Improved Sweep, Level Headed, Two Fisted

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +2:** Listening black scales.
- * **Damage Resistance:** The demon halves all piercing weapon damage and slashing damage from melee weapons. Heavy Weapons, lasers, explosive weapons, and flamethrowers inflict normal damage.
- * **Demon:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage. Immune to poison and disease. No wound penalties.
- * **Gore:** If the demon moves at least 6" before attacking and uses its horn at the end of its movement it causes an additional +4 damage.
- * **Improved Arcane Resistance:** +4 Armor against damage-causing powers and +4 on trait rolls to resist opposed powers.
- * **Necromantic Weapons:** Bone blades and horns (Str+d8). For each wound inflicted on a living foe with these weapons, the demon heals one of its own wounds.
- * **Size +3:** The demon stands around 15' tall.
- * **Spells:** *Barrier, burst, deflection, dispel, puppet* (special: permanent duration unless *dispelled* or the demon is slain), *zombie* (special: once per day can animate all corpses within 24"); 30 Power Points.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Halves penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets.
- * **Weakness (Skull of St. Malachy):** Hitting the demon with the skull causes Str+d10 damage (Range: 3/6/12 for throwing). The damage ignores the demon's natural armor (reducing it to Toughness 11), passes through any *barrier* it has erected, and cannot be Soaked. Unfortunately, the demon dedicates its attacks to killing a character holding the skull after it has been used once.

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REPHAIM MONKS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 4 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 7

Gear: None

Special Abilities:

- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots. Half-damage from piercing weapons.

ORDO TENEBRAE



DARK KNIGHT OFFICER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d8, Riding d8, Shooting d8

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor

Gear: Light armor (+4), flechette SMG with 3 magazines (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 2, Auto), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4)

Special Abilities:

- * **Insane:** These insane soldiers are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

DARK KNIGHT

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

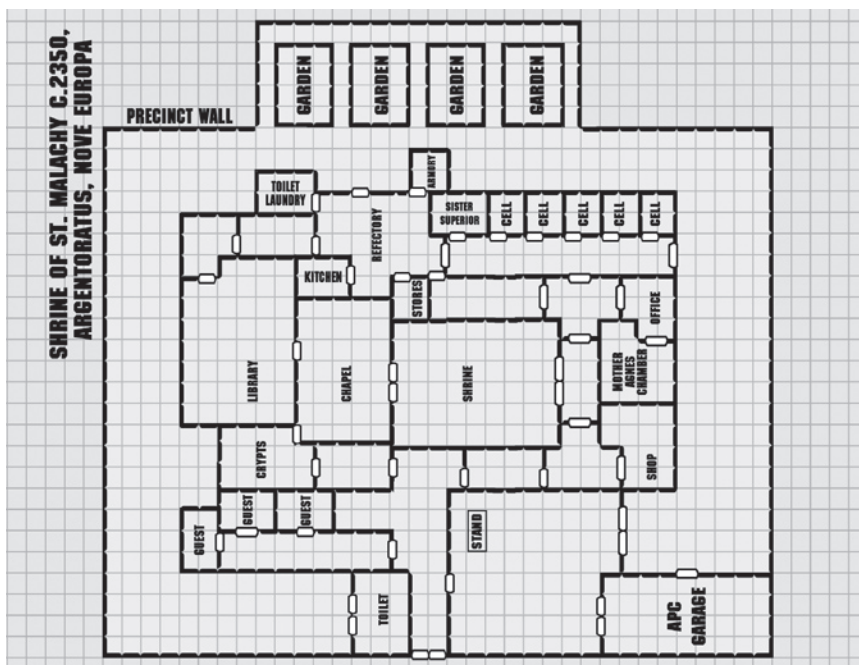
Edges: Combat Reflexes

Gear: Light armor (+4), flechette rifle with 3 magazines (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8+1, AP2, Auto, 3RB), 4 monofilament grenades in GL (Range: 20/40/80, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, MBT), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4)

Special Abilities:

- * **Insane:** These insane soldiers are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

MAP OF SHRINE OF ST. MALACHY C.2350, ARGENTORATUS, NOVE EUROPA



PLAYER HANDOUT #1: TACTICAL BRIEFING

Date: 26.VII, 0600 Zulu.

Good morning! My name is Donald Malidore. I am the Preceptor Marketing and Merchandizing Officer, or MMO for short.

Tomorrow is the feast day of Saint Malachy, and thousands of pilgrims are set to descend on his shrine in Argentoratus in northwest Nova Europa. He's a minor saint, so chances are you have never heard of him. A datasheet has been drawn up listing the pertinent facts. [Give the players Player Handout #2.] Read it thoroughly.

The Preceptor Master has seen fit to organize a recruitment drive to take advantage of the gathering, and your Lance has been volunteered for the hearts and minds mission on behalf of our Ordo.

Mother Superior Agnes, who runs the shrine, has granted us permission to set up a stand outside the main shrine and hand out flyers and promotional material. All you Knights need do is look charming and talk to the locals. Once the potential recruits are engaged in conversation with you, steer them to the marketing and recruiting Sergeants who will be accompanying you. By all means regale them with war stories, but avoid mentioning losses in combat and anything too horrific.

Mother Superior Agnes is a personal friend of His Holiness, so please treat her with great respect, and obey her commands. Although she is advanced in years, she has a reputation as being fearsome when roused. More than one battle-hardened Knight has been reduced to a quivering wreck by her. She has permission from the Preceptor Master to hand out punishments if you break any rules while in her domain, and believe me, she will carry them out.

Security at the shrine is being handled by the resident Sisters of Bradamante, a militant order of nuns unaffiliated to the Sacri Ordines who specialize in this sort of thing. A data update has been prepared. [Give the players the Update: Sister of Bradamante sheet.] Liaise with their commander, Sister Superior Freemont, when you arrive. Should any trouble occur, she is the commanding tactical officer in matters of protecting the shrine, its contents, or Mother Superior Agnes, and you are strongly advised to listen to her—she knows the local terrain, you don't.

You will be flown up to Argentoratus, straight after the briefing by Angel, so you have time to rest before tomorrow and set up the stand. The town is likely to be heaving with pilgrims already. Quarters have been arranged for you near the shrine, and you are under orders to stay within the shrine precincts at all times.

Enemy Forces: Thousands of pilgrims, the occasional fanatic or madman, groupies clamoring to touch you brave war heroes, and some know-it-all armchair generals who will tell you how to win the war are likely to be the worst of your problems. There is always a chance militant heretics will use the gathering to commit some atrocity, so stay sharp out there. Just do not go shooting any innocents—think before you fire!

Support: A handful of marketing and recruitment Sergeants will be accompanying you. These men have not been near a battlefield in years, so please treat them gently. You Knights will draw the crowds, so the Sergeants are basically going to be working in the background.

The Angel will drop you off just outside the shrine's precinct and then fly to the nearest Preceptory, a Templar Maritime Preceptory, to refuel. Your commanding officer will have the necessary radio frequencies and call sign. It will return at 0900 hours on the 28th to bring you back here.

Equipment: Just your standard gear is being issued. We have loaded boxes of recruitment flyers and posters, promotional mugs, pens, and buttons to give away, and other marketing material on the dropship. Do not throw it out en route! Mock flechette weapons are also being supplied. Civilians love this stuff; so let them play soldier all they want. Just don't give them any live weapons.

PLAYER HANDOUT #2: SAINT MALACHY

Born of noble blood in Ireland, Malachy (1094–1148) rose quickly through the Church ranks, becoming Archbishop of Armagh in 1132. Zealous by nature, he helped reform the ailing Irish Church, bringing it back in line with Rome's doctrine. He was also a strong supporter of monasticism, founding the Abbey of Mellifont in 1142.

During a trip to Rome in 1139, he allegedly fell ill and spoke the Prophecy of Popes, though this was never mentioned during his life. Saint Malachy died in 1148 at Clairvaux, in the arms of Bernard of Clairvaux (later Saint Bernard). He was canonized in 1199 by Pope Clement III.

PROPHECY OF THE POPES

On a trip to Rome, St. Malachy reportedly succumbed to illness. During his fevered state, he began spouting brief Latin verses, which an aide duly recorded. Each verse was purportedly a prophecy relating to a future pope. In some cases it gave clues to the identity of the pope, in others the works he would achieve.

Malachy's list ended with Peter of Rome (Petrus Romanus), about whom he said, "During the final persecution of the Holy Roman Church, the seat will be occupied by Peter of Rome, who will feed his sheep in many tribulations; and when these things are finished, the seven-hilled city will be destroyed, and the formidable Judge will judge his people. The End."

The prophecies were not published until 1595, which made the veracity of the authorship dubious. Regardless of who actually wrote them, their interpretations stood the test of time, ringing true one after another. Detractors point out that any prophecy can be twisted to fit known facts.

Following the death of the last-but-one pope, the Catholic Church sought to delay the prophecy in a move which stunned the world. Rather than electing an elder statesman, as was previously the case, they elected a youth, albeit one extremely knowledgeable of religious lore and doctrine, who took the papal name Leo XIV. What the Curia who elected the youth did not know was that he was an orphan whose original name was Peter. Even Peter had no knowledge of his true name. Fate, it seemed, could not be avoided.

Saint Malachy's prophecy began to ring true in 2100. News of the discovery of Chalcis swept the globe and religious upheaval began. Though Rome was not destroyed, her powerbase collapsed rapidly. Already pumped full of anti-aging drugs to extend his life, the pope saw his people through the worst of the strife.

However, drugs could not work miracles, and he died a natural death on November 2, 2148, exactly a thousand years after St. Malachy. In 2149, the First Reformation Church united mankind's religious beliefs, albeit temporarily, ending the Catholic Church's spiritual power. The city of Rome survived until 2198, when it was destroyed during World War III.

SHRINE OF SAINT MALACHY

Saint Malachy's head was exhumed from its shrine in Clairvaux in 2318 and brought to Salus as a holy relic. Since 2320, it has been enshrined in the Shrine of Saint Malachy, in the town of Argentoratus in northwest Nova Europa. Mother Superior Agnes has been keeper of the shrine since its foundation. She is served by a Lance of Sisters of Bradamante.

THE LONG SLEEP

WAR MASTER'S NOTES

Welcome to *The Long Sleep*, a standalone scenario written for the *Necropolis* campaign setting.

If you intend to play in this adventure, you should stop reading **now**. Advanced knowledge of the scenario will only spoil your enjoyment of the game.

The WM should read the entire adventure before play begins. Knowing the basic flow and details in advance will greatly speed up play and make the game run smoother. The early stages of this mission should not be rushed—allow the heroes a chance to slowly piece together the clues and investigate each building as they wish. Eventually, characters built for combat will get a chance to shine.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

You also need a copy of the *Savage Worlds* rule book and the *Necropolis: 2350* Savage Setting. The *Necropolis Figure Flats* are recommended, though any suitable sci-fi or dark future miniatures will suffice.

CHARACTERS

This adventure is designed for a squad of four to six Knights from any of the core holy orders. The adventure is designed for Knights with 25–35 XPs, though lower experienced characters should be able to cope if they use their brains. Use any of the archetypes from the *Necropolis* setting. Each has been designed as a starting character. As such, those used should be advanced as the player wishes to bring them to 30 XPs.

For larger groups or more experienced characters, the WM will need to adjust the number and stats of opponents appropriately to create an exciting challenge.

In addition, a lance of specialist sergeants is available. Stats can be found at the back of this book. Cut them out and glue them to pieces of card for rigidity, then deal them randomly to the players, ensuring every player commands at least one Extra.

CHARACTER DEATH

In any adventure involving combat there is a chance of character death. The nature of this particular mission leaves the heroes cut off from reinforcements.

Should a Wild Card die, the player promotes an Extra of his choice to Wild Card status. All Extras have been built as starting Novice characters, though with only one Hindrance. With the WM's permission, the player may pick more Hindrances and spend the points as normal.

At the end of the mission, the player creates a new Knight character using the normal rules. Experience Points earned for this mission are transferred over to his new character, meaning he hasn't missed out on the rewards.

ANCIENT EVENTS

Many millions of years ago, when dinosaurs still roamed Earth, the Zal were locked in their final, cataclysmic battle with the unknown alien race whose fury they had aroused. Suffering defeat after defeat, the Zal retreated back across the galaxy, leaving behind shattered solar systems and burnt out stars. As has been previously told, the battle in the Salus system marked their defeat. Or so history recorded.

Not all the Zal were imprisoned that fateful day. Many had already seen the inevitable fall of their empire and took steps to preserve some remnants of the race. In their eyes, the Zal were beaten, but they could return stronger, better prepared to once again wage war on a galactic scale.

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On untold worlds they created concealed complexes, sealing themselves away in hibernation until the time was right for their return to glory. Set as guards in each tomb were skeletal robots, the footsoldiers of the Zal. Their form would rise again millions of years later when the Dark Conclave formed their army out of skeletons.

One such hiding hole lay beneath the surface of Salus, then just a backwater world in a backwater part of the galaxy. That the final battle occurred here is one of those great cosmic coincidences.

The Zal lay in slumber, dreaming whatever dreams an alien warmonger has, waiting to emerge, but something went wrong. The final battle ravaged the solar system with weapons of unimaginable force and played havoc with the energy fields maintaining the Zal's life support chambers.

They died to the last (though others may exist on unknown worlds), withering away in their sleep, unable to respond as their life signs faded. Only the skeletal army remained, programmed to defend the complex, not administer medical aid to its slumbering occupants. There they stayed, the entrance hidden beneath a landslide, until a recent earthquake revealed the entrance to the tomb.

RECENT EVENTS

The Ruber Desert lies on Terra Australis and dominates Terra Infernalis. An arid, barren, hostile landscape, it is nonetheless home to dozens of small Church and Union mining and research outposts. One such outpost is "Mars Station," a Church archaeological facility near the Labyrinthus Angelus.

Eight days ago, the archaeologists uncovered what they believed was an ancient alien artifact—a metallic torso bearing marked similarities to that of a human skeleton. This was one of the skeletal robots. How it came to be outside and "die" remains a mystery. All that matters is that a million years ago its remains were buried beneath a natural landslide and became encrusted with rock over time. Its remarkable construction, which defies natural aging, concealed its true age from the archaeologists.

That night, an earthquake dislodged the surrounding stone, revealing for the first time in countless millions of years the entrance to the tomb. Though they investigated, the archaeolo-

gists were unable to enter the tomb complex, stymied by a huge door engraved with alien symbols.

A few days later, they powered up the remains of the robot to see what they could learn. In the deepest recesses of its backup CPU, the robot sensed intelligent life, alien life, enemy life. It activated a warning signal, awakening its brethren to battle once more. That evening, the skeletal robots marched into the camp, slaughtering everyone they could find.

Four days ago, the Church expected a routine signal, but it never came. Despite solar flares blocking much global communication, Knights of the Sacri Ordines are duly sent to investigate the silence.

In the first part of this adventure, the heroes investigate the deserted archaeological facility and slowly piece together events of the past few days. Shortly after their arrival, a massive storm blankets the area, plunging the region into darkness. As the storm rages, an army of skeletal robots responds to the appearance of the Knights' dropship and marches to the camp, ready to slay everything they encounter.

Once the skeletal horde is defeated, the heroes, cut off from their Preceptory, have little option but to take the war to the robots and explore the ancient tomb. After untold millions of years, the tomb of the Zal will be entered by living creatures.

Note that while the heroes are able to enter, explore, and interact with parts of the tomb, they will not receive all the answers they seek. Even discovering the Zal's name will take many decades of laborious research. Actually deducing the secrets of their surviving technology could take centuries. As such, the tomb remains an enigma, something the heroes (and players) will never be able to truly understand. For this reason, few true secrets are provided for the War Master (to avoid any temptation to use them).

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

Five minutes before the team is due to land, the dropship pilot, Knight Vehicle Crewman Eduardo Gonzalez, contacts the Senior Knight over his headset communicator and informs him there is no response from the facility's traffic controller, nor is the landing guidance beacon activated. The Senior Knight is given control of the comms, allowing him to try and get through (he can't).

A few minutes later the base comes into visual range. The pilot switches the gun camera feed through to the passenger bay, where it appears on a small screen.

Have the Senior Knight and two others of his choice (those sat near him) make Notice rolls. Success reveals the base appears structurally intact, with no sign of any major explosion in or around the processing plant. The landing pad is clear, but there is an industrial crawler nearby. However, there is no movement to be seen. On a raise, the Knight realizes the external solar relay doesn't have its panels extended nor is there any indication the base has power (no landing lights, for instance).

LANDING

As the dropship begins its final approach, Gonzalez gives a ten second countdown. As soon as the squad has disembarked, the dropship blasts back into the air. Gonzalez radios in that he'll do a quick sweep of the surrounding area before heading back for the HARD shelter. Orders are orders, and his come from a higher authority, so there is no way to persuade the dropship to hang around.

TIMED ENCOUNTERS

Aside from specific encounters detailed in the Tactical Briefings, there are a number of set encounters which occur during this mission. Each has a number in parentheses, such as (L+120). This refers to the number of game minutes which have passed since the team landed.

Because of this, the WM must keep a secret record of how much overall time passes from the moment the team touches down. Certain activities, such as repairing the power plant, have their time listed in the appropriate section. Other guidelines for how long likely activities take are presented below. Other activities should be determined by the WM based on best guess and real-world actions.

Since the party is likely to divide its forces, the WM should keep track of each group or individual separately. It also allows you to quickly work out how much time remains before a lengthy task is finished. For instance, if one team goes to repair the power station (an hour) and another investigates a single habitat block (probably 15 minutes at most), you can easily see there are 45 minutes remaining before the station may be fixed and the personnel assigned elsewhere.

Data Retrieval: Takes 15 minutes and an Investigation roll to search the systems and recover the various logs (see Player Handouts and detailed areas). Logs can only be recovered from specific computers. Apart from these, there is nothing of relevance to the adventure, though the Knights won't know that.

Healing: As stated in the main rules, each use of Healing to patch up a wound takes 10 minutes.

Searching Corpses: It takes 1 minute to thoroughly pat down a body and rifle through pockets, satchels, or other simple storage items. Unless an item is extremely small or very well concealed, discovery of any objects is automatic.

Searching Buildings: Performing a cursory search of a 2" by 2" area takes 2 minutes but gives a -2 penalty on Notice rolls. This involves moving a few objects and looking in obvious places. A thorough search takes 5 minutes and gives no penalty. Unless otherwise stated in specific area descriptions, there is nothing of use to be found by searching areas.

ENCOUNTER 1: ALL CLEAR (L+10)

The Senior Knight's headset radio crackles to life as the dropship roars overhead and Gonzalez calls in after performing his sweep.

"Broadsword to Viper 1, Broadsword to Viper 1. Sweep is clean, sir," Gonzalez says. "There's nothing moving for twenty miles in any direction. Juice is getting low and the burning bush has requested I get back on the yellow brick road ASAP. You guys are on your own for the next few hours. God speed! Broadsword out."

ENCOUNTER 2: HUNGRY DOGS (L+25)

Gonzalez's sweep didn't detect any life, but his sensors couldn't penetrate the canyon, wherein are numerous caves. Hiding in these are several dogs, pets, and guard animals for the scientists. They fled during the attack, but their loyalty has caused them to remain near the facility. However, they are half-mad from starvation and thirst, and the sound of the dropship has lured them out.

Forming a pack, the hounds bound into the camp, entering at the north end of the canyon. They head for anything moving outside, intent

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on tearing it limb from limb. They use Gang Up tactics, to a maximum of four dogs per person. If no characters are visible, they just move around the camp, scratching at doors until someone appears.

After their defeat, a character can perform an autopsy in the medical center. This requires a Healing roll and takes 30 minutes. Success indicates the dogs were starving and dying of dehydration. Don't tell the heroes this was why they attacked—they may come up with a more irrational explanation and should be allowed to believe whatever they want.

STARVING DOGS (8)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6(A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d10, Tracking d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 3

Special Abilities:

- * **Bite:** d6+d4.
- * **Fleet Footed:** Dogs roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- * **Go for the Throat:** Dogs instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly armored location.
- * **Size -1:** Dogs are relatively small creatures.

ENCOUNTER 3: WEATHER WARNING (L+90)

After 90 minutes, a brief, heavily distorted message comes through the satellite radio from the Preceptory. The message is not repeated. No response is possible. The storm has been generated as a result of the increased solar activity and is not on any radar systems at the start of the mission.

"...weather warning. Repeat, this is <crackle, hiss>. Extreme weather <biss>. Massive sandstorm heading <biss>. Estimate <crackle hiss> 30 minutes. Batten down the <crackle>. Could last several <biss>. Repeat, this is..."

ENCOUNTER 4: SANDSTORM (L+120)

The storm arrives fast and hard—heroes outside receive five minutes warning before the storm engulfs the facility.

The wind rapidly strengthens to gale force, bowling over small, unsecured items. Thick plumes of red sand are kicked up and swirled around, adding to the particles carried by the winds. Overhead, sheet lightning rips through the sandstorm, briefly turning the sky blood red. The storm continues for the remainder of the adventure.

EFFECTS

Movement: Movement outside is treated as difficult ground due to the strong winds. Movement over already difficult ground is treated as 4" per 1" of actual movement.

Lighting: Outside, lighting conditions drop to Dark (-2 penalty and no visibility beyond 10") as the sun is blocked out and Dim within an area illuminated by street lights. (References to streetlights only apply if there is power.) This allows Shooting into an area illuminated by the street lights at a -1 penalty. Unless there is power and the lights are switched on, lighting inside a building drops to Pitch Darkness.

The robots (see **Encounter 6**) halve all bad lighting penalties against living targets and those producing heat—such as a vehicle with the engine running.

Combat: At the start of each combat round, deal an extra action card and consult the table below. All effects last for the current round.

Card	Effect
Black Deuce	The sky turns extremely dark and a dense cloud of dust sweeps across the base. Treat all unlit areas as Pitch Darkness this round. Areas around streetlights are Dark.
Black King	A powerful flash illuminates the sky. For a few moments, visibility improves to Dim lighting outside, daylight conditions under streetlights, and Dark inside buildings without lights.
Black Ace	The lightning is particularly powerful. Treat all outside areas as daylight and unlit interiors as Dim.
Joker	The storm dies down momentarily, removing all darkness penalties.
Other	As the main rules for this section.

ENCOUNTER 5: POWER OUTAGE (L+135)

This encounter occurs only if the power station has been repaired.

Shortly after the storm hits, an intense electrical charge trips the power station's surge protectors, fooling it into shutting off power and plunging the base into darkness. Fixing the problem requires a visit to the power station and a Repair roll to override the surge protectors. Each roll takes one round. Failures may be reattempted.

Unfortunately, at the same instant the power dies, the creatures who attacked the facility before make an appearance (see **Encounter 6**).

ENCOUNTER 6: ATTACK (L+140)

WM Note: When the robots attack, they initially have no idea where the heroes are located. To represent this unknown, the WM should read this section and decide where to place the robots *before* starting the adventure. Thus, when they do attack, it is fate which places a Knight in the danger zone, not WM knowledge.

Five minutes after the relay trips, the robots arrive, summoned earlier by remote sensors which detected the Knights' dropship. There are 14 of them. Due to the poor lighting caused by the storm, they can approach quite close before they are spotted. The robots attack in two groups of five and one group of four, each entering from a different edge of the battlefield, as chosen by the WM.

Position all the robots at least 16" from any light source or building. Then move them their regular Pace until one is spotted (this requires someone to be on sentry duty). Run the combat as normal.

Despite their low intelligence, the robots are not stupid. They are programmed to use cover both for protection and to conceal movement. They have the intelligence to shoot distant targets and Aim if targets are in cover. Remember, thermal vision works in the storm, giving them a tactical advantage.

The group is outnumbered by the robots, but they have several advantages of their own. First, they hold the facility, which means they have the luxury of being able to fire from windows or get onto the roofs. Second, they have a lot of ammunition at their disposal, plus any explosives they have salvaged from the stores.

Third, they are capable of using more advanced tactics. Finally, if things are going very badly, there is always the illegal SBAC.

STORM EFFECTS (OPTIONAL)

As seen above, the lighting during the storm is variable. When a robot becomes visible to at least one Knight, place his miniature on the tabletop. Remember, the Knights have headset communicators so they can report sightings to each other. When the robot moves out of range or the lighting conditions prevent him being seen by anyone, remove the figure.

Although this will slow down the combat, it will add far more atmosphere than just telling the players, "There is a skeletal robot there, but you can't see him and therefore can't react to his presence." Having a foe suddenly appear 11" away because it has been illuminated by a powerful flash of lightning should provide an air of excitement and fear.

SKELETAL ROBOTS (14)

Even before they were imprisoned behind the black hole and transformed into the Rephaim, the Zal were interested in death. Their robot armies were built in the form of skeletal Zal (whose form was close to that of humans) so as to sow fear into enemies.

Robots were equipped with multiple redundant systems and even nannite repair systems, allowing them to continue functioning after taking light damage. Back in their day, the robots were regarded as immortals by less technological races.

Despite their armor and weaponry, these robots are second-rate troops, lacking the energy shields and advanced programming of superior models. Their weapons cannot be used by the Knights—they draw power from the robot's internal power supply, and use encoded electrical impulses to actually fire. The weapon fires a beam of intense energy, which literally breaks down every atom, disintegrating flesh, bone, even metal.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Gear: Energy rifle (Range: 24/48/96; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; Shots unlimited in hands of robot; AP 2, HW) with molecular blade attachment (Str+d8+2, AP 4, requires 2 hands)

Special Abilities:

* **Armor +4:** Tough metallic structure.

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- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to poison and disease.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Redundant Systems:** A robot is very hard to keep down. Whenever one is wounded by any means other than a Called Shot to the head, area effect attack, or Heavy Weapon, draw a card from the action deck. A red card indicates the robot is disabled as normal and out of the fight. A black card (or Joker) means the robot ignores the damage from the attack.
- * **Teleport:** When the robot is killed by any means other than a Called Shot to the head or an area effect weapon, an emergency teleporter activates. This instantly transports the thing back to the nearest base (in this case, the tomb). This was a basic safety feature to prevent Zal technology from falling into enemy hands. The robots cannot voluntarily activate this system.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Robots halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.

ENC. 7: BROADSWORD DOWN (L+141)

At the start of the 10th round of combat (that's just one minute after it begins), the character manning the satellite radio receives a transmission.

"Broadsword to Viper 1, Broadsword to Viper 1. ETA one minute. Repeat, time to landing on the pad is one minute. Be on the ready line!"

Communication with Broadsword is two-way, so the Knight can appraise the drop ship of their situation. Broadsword intends to make a quick landing and take-off, however—the engines are sucking in too much dust for the dropship to start engaging in combat, the winds are making flight extremely difficult, and Gonzalez has no wish to shoot any of his comrades. As such, he requests the Knights be on the landing pad when he arrives.

At the start of the 8th round after Broadsword's contact, anyone outside sees the lights of the Angel approaching, it's powerful nose-mounted searchlight cutting through the storm.

At the start of next round, have each character make a Notice roll at -2 (due to the storm). With success, read the first paragraph. Should they all fail, read the second paragraph.

"As the dropship slows to land, you notice a sickly green glow grow in the north, from somewhere in the canyon. Suddenly a beam of energy lances through the storm, striking Broadsword's cockpit. The pilot likely dead, Broadsword spirals to the earth, engines screaming. Time seems to stand still as the ship crashes nose first into the canyon wall, erupting in a huge fireball. The shockwave and heat roll over the landing pad as Broadsword disintegrates in a raging inferno."

"You see a bright flash of green light in the sky, then hear the howl of dropship engines straining. Spiraling out of the air some 50 yards away is Broadsword. Time seems to stand still as the ship crashes nose first into the canyon wall, erupting in a huge fireball. The shockwave and heat roll over the landing pad as Broadsword disintegrates in a raging inferno."

Without Broadsword, the heroes have no immediate hope of rescue. The storm continues to rage for the rest of the adventure and solar flares prohibit communication. More immediately, however, the Knights may find themselves in the open with skeletal robots still on the rampage.

The energy beam is generated from the ancient Zal tomb. When the tomb was "asleep," the beam was inert. Now some of the inhabitants have awakened, and the defenses have activated, though the system is faulty (its automatic target tracking system no longer works). The robots at the base sent a visual feed back to the tomb, triggering the cannon to fire on the "incoming enemy vehicle."

Should all the robots be destroyed, the WM can assume the tracking system worked well enough for a single shot. Isolating the Knights from the outside world at this stage is important.

AFTERMATH

With no hope of immediate rescue and the storm still raging, the team has only one real option after defeating the skeletal robots—to explore the archaeological site. It should be obvious from the clues that the source of the problems centers there. Leaving a possible threat behind Church lines is an unwise option. Should the Knights not choose this course of

action, a surviving Extra points out it is their duty to ensure the safety of the Church at any cost.

Walking to the site through the storm takes around four hours. The crawler isn't much faster, but at least the heroes have some shelter from the wind and sand.

THE ADVENTURE ENDS

The mission ends once heroes have finished investigating the Zal tomb in the canyon. As they emerge from the tunnel, the Knights see the storm has died down in a few hours. The solar flares ease up enough for them to broadcast an SOS. A few hours later, three Lazarite dropships appear—one for the heroes and two carrying reinforcements dressed in HARD suits and armed with flamethrowers and laser rifles.

The Knights are shepherded into the dropship. The reinforcements, led by a Knight Commander, refuse to answer any questions, instead simply insisting the heroes vacate the site. Should the characters refuse to play ball, the Lazarites threaten them with deadly force. They are not concerned with the characters and are quite willing to execute them.

Once back at their Preceptory, the Knights are debriefed by their Knight Commander. Within a few hours the Field Master orders them to his office. He asks each of them to take a vow never to reveal what they discovered, promising a lengthy tour with the Penitents should they break their silence.

The entire region is sealed off while Church scientists begin the lengthy process of investigating the tomb and discovering its deeper secrets. The Knights hear nothing more of discoveries, these being kept firmly under wraps.

Note that if the Knights didn't hand over all the discs, there is a chance they may return to the tomb of their own volition to find answers. The site is crawling with Lazarite scientists, who have commandeered Mars Station as their base. Any more adventures set at the tomb are left to the WM to devise, but he is cautioned the Lazarites have orders to use *any* means necessary to keep its existence a secret.

Should the Knights mention the email regarding the sale of historical artifacts to a private collector, the CIS is duly informed and launches an investigation. Within a week, Cardinal Howe is arrested and his private collection confiscated. Many of the objects are given to museums in Vatican City, but a few vanish. Howe is charged with "heresy and trafficking in forbidden objects" and burned at



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the stake a month later without being granted absolution. He does not protest his innocence. Davis is posthumously excommunicated for his role in the affair.

Award each Knight Experience Points depending on how well the mission went. If they fail to enter the tomb or return with out any discs (to allow scientists access), they should receive just a single point, having effectively failed the adventure.

THE FACILITY

This chapter details the archaeological station. WMs should ensure they know the details of each building, as different clues can be found in these areas.

GENERAL NOTES

This section details features shared across the base. Differences are noted in the appropriate building description.

Buildings: All doors and walls are heavily armored (Heavy Armor +10).

Corpses: There are no bodies in the camp. The attacker's energy weapons literally vaporized most of the scientists, leaving no trace. The few left over corpses were taken back to the tomb, standard orders for the Zal's robots.

Doors: Once power is restored, doors require an authorized swipe card to open. Some areas require specially authorized cards. Because the scientists treated each other as extended family, any swipe card can open an accommodation block unless a security code has been activated, in which case only the occupants' card or a command card (which overrides all security locks) works.

Hand Cranking: Due to standard features designed to keep out the fine dust, the outer door to any structure must be closed before the inner door can be opened. There is no way to override this. Without power, the doors must be hand cranked—a process which takes 10 minutes in total.

Cutting: Knights may elect to cut through the doors. This takes a total of 2 minutes (1 minute per door), but leaves the entrances wide open to the wind, sand, and any aggressors.

Furniture & Fittings: Free standing low-height furniture and fittings, such as chairs, tables, computer terminals, and beds, may be crossed as difficult terrain. None of it is

firmly attached to the walls or floor. Tipping it over is an action. All furniture and fitting are dense plastic and provide +2 Armor if used for Cover.

Lighting: Outside it is a clear sky and bright sunshine. Inside buildings with windows, however, the lighting is Dark (–2 penalty) due to the sand-scoured glass. Peering through a window gives –2 to Notice rolls.

Low Walls: Crossing a low wall uses 2" of movement. The walls provide +4 Armor when used as Cover.

Plasma Screen: (Requires power) Embedded in the walls around the facility are small plasma screens. These allowed the miners to watch Church and Corporate broadcasts when the weather permitted. A data disc player with a collection of movies is located below each screen in habitation and recreation areas.

The system ties into the facility's comms network, acting as a videophone to other sets around the base. The weather conditions are blocking all TV signals except internal ones, which are hardwired fiber optics. Deducting the workings of the internal system requires 1 minute and a successful Smarts roll.

Power: There is no power when the team arrives. The power plant has been damaged and must be repaired (p. 14). Doors must be cranked open manually, a laborious and time-consuming process, thanks to the airlock system in place. Similarly, no lights, air conditioning, computer systems, food dispensers, and the like are functioning.

Street Lights: (Requires power) So long as there is power, the lights automatically activate during the storm. Place a Large Blast Template face down under the center of each street light. Details of lighting conditions can be found on page 24.

Windows: A few structures have windows. None of the windows can be opened, though they can be shattered (Toughness 8 for breaking, Armor +10). The windows are not very large.

Wriggling through a shattered window takes 3" of movement for Small characters (Size –1). For normal size characters, it takes 3" of movement and is treated as an action. A successful Agility roll at –2 allows movement through as part of a character's regular Pace, though it still uses 3" of movement. Brawny and Obese characters (Size +1) always treat crawling through a window as an action and it uses 4" of Pace. Creatures of Size +2 or greater

cannot fit through the small space. Only creatures of Size -2 can move through a window while running.

CHAPEL

Being a Church-owned facility, there is a chapel. Once the chapel is located, have the characters make a Common Knowledge roll (+2 for Chaplains). With success, they know the priests sent to these remote outposts are often "problem cases."

GAINING ACCESS

The inner door has been sealed with a locking code, which disables even the hand cranking mechanism. Until power is restored, the room cannot be entered, except by cutting the doors. Once power is back on, a hero can make a Lockpicking roll at -2 to run a bypass. This takes one minute per attempt. Alternately, a command level card can be used. The chapel has no windows.

INTERIOR

Once the Knights gain access, read the following text.

By the light of myriad candles, the only source of light, you can see the walls are covered in prayers, hastily written in what appears to be ink. Among them you recognize prayers requesting salvation of body and soul. Kneeling before the altar is a figure in priestly garb, his head bowed. He rocks from side to side and a low murmur can be heard. He makes no indication he has detected your presence.

Should a Knight call out, the figure raises a hand (concealed beneath heavy robes) to signal for silence. After a few moments, the figure rises and turns to face the Knights.

The priest turns, throwing back his cowl. His skin has been torn away, revealing glistening muscles. A large, ragged gash across his throat indicates a mortal wound. "So," he hisses, "you have come to ask salvation from your sins? Allow me to bless you!" With that he raises his hands and chants, calling on the powers of Hell.

Deal initiative cards.

TACTICS

The Rephaim priest begins by unleashing three bolts of necromantic energy, aiming them at any Knights first. He then dives for Cover

behind the nearest pew. On subsequent rounds he casts *armor* and then *obscure*, before using any remaining spell points on more bolts. Only when out of Power Points (or attacked first) does he engage in melee.

FEATURES

Altar: The altar provides +4 Armor if used as Cover. Written across the altar in blood are strange runes. Characters who understand Cryptspeak recognize them as Rephaim glyphs. If translated, they speak vaguely of destroying human life, using blood to give life, and other damnable acts. It is clear to anyone who speaks Cryptspeak the altar was not very conversant in the language.

Washing the altar clean takes 10 minutes (and requires water). Using a flamethrower to destroy the desecrated altar takes a single action.

Should the altar be left desecrated, all characters who see it suffer a -1 penalty to Spirit rolls. This lasts until it is cleansed or the Knights leave the facility.

Lectern: In front of the altar stands a lectern, atop which is a copy of the Book of Salvation, a common holy tome. Attached to the cover with crude stitches are scraps of human skin (the priest's facial skin). This requires a Guts roll. Anyone who looks inside sees phrases like, "Lies to enslave the weak," "I have tasted of His power and was born anew," and "Blessed be the Darkness," scrawled on every page in blood.

Font: The font is full of thick, congealed blood. The priest tried to save his soul from a fate worse than death by slitting his throat. He failed.

Pews: The pews are heavy plastic benches with high backs. They provide +3 Armor when used as Cover. There is enough clearance to crawl under them and move around the chapel.

Swipe Cards: Father David carries a command level swipe card.

Taint: The dark taint and desecration give heroes with Faith or a Saintry Litany a -2 penalty to arcane skill rolls while in the building. This is removed only when the chapel is cleansed.

(WC) FATHER DAVID, ZOMBIE NECROMANCER

Father David was a true problem case. Allegations of serious misconduct and even heretical preaching were swept under the

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carpet and the priest sent to the remote outpost, his superiors believing hardship would be good for his soul.

Father David was one of the first on the scene after the discovery of the tomb. As he studied the bizarre glyphs and images on the walls, he became convinced the structure contained the forces of Hell in material form, and his sanity cracked.

Back at the base, the priest shut himself in the chapel and prayed for salvation. When the firing began, he believed the Devil (a figure the Church no longer recognizes) had come for his black soul. In desperation he began scribbling out prayers, hoping the holy words would prevent the "demons" from entering. As the firing came closer, his desperation grew. He made his peace with God and committed suicide, slitting his own throat, trusting in the Lord to understand his reasons for this mortal sin.

Someone listened to his dying prayers, but it wasn't God. The Dark, always eager for more souls, convinced the priest and promised him eternal life at his right hand. With his last gasp, Father David sealed the dark pact, rising shortly afterward as a zombie blessed with necromantic powers. He converted the chapel as best he could into an altar to the Dark and began worshipping in his own debased way.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d10, Spellcasting d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2).

Special Abilities:

- * **Claws:** Str.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear & Intimidation.
- * **Powers:** *Armor* (skin turns black), *bolt* (ray of black light), *obscure* (darkness); 25 Power Points.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Halves penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage. Immune to poison and disease. Piercing weapons do half damage.

COMMAND HABITATS

The habitat blocks were occupied by the command staff. All are designed around a standard layout, though the former occupants personalized them with photos of loved ones,

posters, and such like. The name of the former inhabitant is listed on a plaque screwed to each door.

FEATURES

Computer Terminal: (Requires power) Each habitat has a computer. It contains diaries, work schedules, accounts, emails, and the like. There is nothing of interest on three of the computers, though discovering this takes 10 minutes at the terminal and a successful Investigation roll.

Wright's terminal, however, contains the facility command log. When the Investigation roll succeeds, give the group Player Handout #3.

Plasma Screen: In one habitat block, a Corporate music video was left playing on a loop. When power is restored, this reactivates, blaring out at full volume. Anyone in the room when the power is switched on must make a Guts roll or be Shaken by the sudden cacophony. The WM should pick a habitat occupied by one or more characters when power is restored.

Swipe Card: Running Deer's habitat contains a command level swipe card on her bed. She left it when she ran outside to investigate the shooting.

COMMUNICATION SUITE

The facility's communication suite is an outdated wide broadcast system, meaning it pumps out radio waves in all directions rather than through a tight beam. As such, it is highly susceptible to solar flares, as well as general atmospheric interference. It has a range of around 5,000 miles on a good day.

FEATURES

Comms System: (Requires power) Once power is restored, the system begins transmitting a standard SOS signal every 10 seconds. The SOS is non-specific and merely indicates the scientists require immediate assistance.

Computer Terminal: (Requires power) An Investigation roll and five minutes checking through the logs reveals an SOS signal was sent late on 22.IV.2351. Selecting a log entry replays the message. It mentions an outbreak of hostilities with unknown assailants but nothing more specific. The log reveals it was sent by Wright, the base commander. The storm caused the signal to become lost in the ether, hence why it was never received.

LABORATORY

The laboratory was where the scientists returned promising samples for study. Several tables, some chairs, a small X-ray machine, a chemical analyzer, and two computer terminals are the only items of furniture. On one of the tables is a large object covered in a sheet—wires from a power source outlet run under the covering.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Computer Terminal: (Requires power) An Investigation roll and 15 minutes research reveals some clues about the robot. Give the players Handout #4 at this time.

Robot Torso: Beneath the sheet is what at first appears to be a skeleton human torso, complete with arms (but no head). A Notice roll reveals the “bones” are in fact metal.

The robot is the partial remains of a Zal skeletal servitor. When it was powered up, it sent an automatic signal to awaken its comrades and come to its aid. Fortunately for the Knights, damage to the power station caused a total power loss and the robot fell silent once more, its damaged internal power supplies being unable to hold any charge. Unable to locate the beacon and programmed to accept the silence as meaning it was either vaporized or had returned to the tomb through its teleporter, the robots slaughtered the “aliens” they could find and retreated to await the Zal’s eventual return and new orders.



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Should power be restored while the cables are still attached, the robot powers up enough to begin silently broadcasting its signal back to the tomb. This alerts the other robots, who move to investigate. If the Knights detach the cables, then the Knight's dropship was detected and the sentries alerted.

LANDING PAD

The landing pad is large enough to take an Angel dropship. Remote facilities such as this one are kept regularly supplied by civilian versions of Pedaal dropships.

FEATURES

Computer Terminal: (Requires power) The computer is a diagnostic system used to help find faults in dropships or vehicles. Once powered up, it grants +1 to Repair rolls when fixing vehicles.

Guidance Beacon & Lights: (Requires power) The landing guidance beacon and landing lights are in working order—they just lack power. Once power is resorted they begin working normally.

Vehicles: There is one vehicle near the pad—a standard industrial crawler. This is described in more detail below.

INDUSTRIAL CRAWLER

The crawler is a standard Damocles Industries Model 3000G Industrial Crawler, known affectionately as the "Scoop." Damocles is a Church-operated firm specializing in manufacturing of construction industry ground vehicles. Any character with the Driving skill has likely operated one—the Sacri Ordines use them as well. Slow but steady, the Scoop is ubiquitous across Church territory.

The Scoop requires a single operator, though there is room in the cab for two people.

The bucket is raised and lowered by hydraulic rams, though it only has a maximum height of a foot. As well as being able to scoop up loose debris, it can be used as a general cargo hauler. Although the operator's manual states persons shouldn't travel in the rear bucket for reasons of safety, it can comfortably hold four passengers. Troops hiding in the heavily armored bucket have +6 Heavy Armor when firing from Cover.

This particular Scoop is well weathered but is in good working order. The bucket is currently empty.

DAMOCLES INDUSTRIES "SCOOP"

Acc/Top Speed: 2/8; **Toughness:** 15/15/19 (2/2/6); **Handling:** -2; **Crew:** 1+1 (+4 in bucket)

Notes: Heavy Armor (bucket only), Tracked

MAIN HABITAT

The main habitat block comprises a number of small rooms, each decorated with personal effects. These housed the non-command staff. Every room houses a bed and a wardrobe.

Each door bares a name plaque. Sex and role are listed in parentheses for the WM, so he can add flavor to individual rooms. The names are as follows.

Davis, P (male archaeologist), Redburn, K (female archaeologist), Baissant, O (male senior technician), Nasamwari, J (male technician), Smith, R (male service Manager), Cooper, R (female services), Boucher, J (male digger), Kowalski, S (female digger), Peers, X (male digger), and Narro, Y (male digger).

FEATURES

There is little if any of interest to the Knights—just clothes, a little money, photos of family and loved ones, and routine personal logs.

Computer Terminal: (Requires power) Each room has a computer terminal. It contains diaries, work schedules, accounts, emails, and the like. There is nothing of interest in most of them (see below), though discovering this takes 10 minutes at the terminal and a successful Investigation roll.

If the heroes don't search Davis' terminal for clues, have it begin beeping loudly and flashing a warning that there are unsent emails at a later point in the adventure. The clues it holds are important.

Hidden Object: A strange metallic object is concealed in the second room searched. This room belongs to Davis, one of the archaeologists. In order to find it the heroes must search the computer. A successful Investigation roll reveals an unsent email (due to the flares jamming the comms). Give the players Handout #5 at this point. The disc is hidden in the overhead light (the clue is in the email).

As the email says, it is an inch across, metallic, and has glyphs on both sides. Analysis requires use of the main laboratory (and power). A successful Common Knowledge roll and 30 minutes work reveals the metal is of unknown composition, but matches that of the

skeletal torso exactly. Due to its strange composition, no dating evidence can be gathered to confirm Davis' claim.

The disc, once carried by the robot, is a key to open the tomb complex. The heroes will need it for the second part of the mission.

MEDICAL CENTER

Compared to what most citizens have access to, the medical center is a modern miracle. In comparison, to the Sacri Ordines' facilities, it is lacking. It contains two beds, a blood analysis kit, surgical tools, and standard medical supplies, such as bandages, thermometers, stethoscopes, and so on.

FEATURES

Drug Cabinet: The drug cabinet is locked. Opening it requires a Lockpicking roll and 5 minutes or a command level swipe card and power to the lock. Inside are a variety of filled syringes, bottles of liquids and pills, and a dispensary pad to record stock. These equate to 20 units of supplies for a medikit or field surgery kit.

Fridge: (Requires power) Contains 20 ruined units of synthetic blood and plasma.

General Medicine: Using the facility grants a +1 bonus to Healing rolls.

Search: A successful search around the main console locates a packet of four syringes hidden in a drawer. A Healing roll identifies them as illegal stims, used by miners because it allows them to ignore fatigue and work harder. Like many citizens, miners are paid based on results, not the hours they work.

Each dose instantly removes one level of Fatigue, except those caused by the virus. For an hour after use, they also increase Vigor by one die type.

However, they are also highly addictive. A character using them must make a Spirit roll with a cumulative -1 penalty for each dose taken in the last 4 hours. On a failure, he becomes addicted and gains the Major Habit Hindrance.

POWER STATION & SOLAR RELAY

The base's power station makes use of solar energy. Light is converted to electrical energy at the external solar relay (see below) and stored in massive, subterranean, rapid-charge,

high-storage capacitors. During storms and at night, the capacitors' stored energy is released, supplying the base with its electrical needs. To conserve power, high-usage areas, such as the processing plant, automatically shutdown during these times.

During the fight, the power station was damaged by gunfire, causing a general system shutdown to prevent extreme feedback. Unfortunately, a secondary fault caused the capacitors to release much of their charge. The capacitors are currently charged with enough juice for just one hour standard use and begin discharging once the main system is repaired.

Repairing the system takes an hour and requires a Repair roll at -2 (with an additional -2 if not using tools). Up to two other persons can Cooperate on this roll. Failures can be re-rolled, but each attempt takes a full hour. With success, power flows again. Systems begin to reboot, lights flicker on, airlocks work properly, and so on.

Once power is restored, a digital readout shows the current storage (1 hour) compared to the maximum storage (168 hours) and the amount of energy being used. Recharging requires one or more solar panels on the relay station to be extended.

SOLAR RELAY

The solar relay is used to collect solar energy.

A hero with Repair d6+ who spends 2 minutes inspecting the solar relay automatically realizes the solar panels are in "protection mode," stored inside the relay to safeguard them from damage. He knows this is standard procedure during sandstorms or power outages. To allow maintenance, the panels can be hand cranked into the extended position. This takes two minutes per panel and there are four in total.

Any hero with the Repair skill knows how to crank the panels safely. Other characters must make an Agility roll per panel. A critical failure causes the panel to jam, requiring a Repair roll and five minutes work to fix it. The Repair roll may be reattempted.

Once power is restored to the facility, extending the panels takes just a few seconds with the press of a button on the relay, from the power station, or from the operations center.

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For each hour a panel is extended in bright sunlight it provides enough charge to the capacitors for three hours of use. Thus, all four panels working together provide 12 hours of energy per hour they are extended.

Given the sandstorm strikes exactly two hours after the heroes arrive and the power station must be repaired before energy can be stored (a minimum of an hour), they will, at best, be able to store just 12 hours of energy. This is enough to last the coming night.

By carefully conserving energy, such as switching off unused computer terminals and lights, and closing down air conditioning in unoccupied buildings, this can be extended to 48 hours.

RECREATION

The Rec Center was the hub of the facility's social life. The scientists cooked and ate their meals here, played cards and arcade games, listened to music and watched movies, and engaged in the time-honored tradition of brawling. It also houses the communal showers and toilets.

FEATURES

Game Consoles: The game consoles provide +3 Armor if used as Cover. A character who wants to waste 15 minutes and who succeeds at an Agility roll sets a new high score. His Agility roll becomes the target for others wishing to beat him.

Kitchen: Contains standard plastic utensils, cutlery, and dishes, as well as heavy-duty plastic cooking pots. The oven, microwave, and deep fryers are all electrical. Heating the fryer takes 10 minutes.

Any creature shoved into the fryer takes 2d10 damage. A thrown pan of hot fat has Range 2/4/8, Damage 2d8. Adjacent targets are splashed for 2d4 damage. This counts as an area effect attack. Treat targets soaked in hot fat as very flammable.

Pantry: The pantry contains enough dehydrated and tinned food to last for several weeks. The two large chest freezers (+4 Armor) have no power, and the contents are spoiled.

Snack Machines: The snack machines stock a variety of candy, potato chips, and soft drinks. Acquiring a snack or beverage requires a swipe card or smashing the glass (Toughness 4). The vending machines provide +3 Armor when used as Cover.

Swipe Card: The insane worker (see below) carries a standard swipe card.

SEALED ROOM

The back room, once used as the cinema, has been welded shut from the inside. The only way inside is to cut through or enter via a window. The internal blinds are down, which prevent anyone from seeing into the room.

Inside is a former member of the facility staff (Xavier Peers). During the incident, he welded himself into the room, leaving his comrades to die. As their screams echoed through the building, Peers, already half crazed from seeing the attackers, went insane. He is now homicidally paranoid, convinced the attackers still wait for him.

If the heroes make any noise while outside the door, such as shouting or cutting through, Peers, convinced they are skeletal robots, takes up a defensive position behind the door and prepares to attack. The Knights must check for Surprise when the door is finally opened as the lunatic attacks without warning. Peers attacks in a homicidal rage, from which he cannot be calmed.

Even if taken alive he is of limited use to the Knights—his mind has shattered. A successful Healing roll sedates him for several hours (after which he awakes in a similarly insane state). *Puppet* can be used to draw secrets from his mind, though Peers is allowed a second roll to resist any form of questioning which involves the skeletons. Successful use elicits a single response, "The shining dead came for us!"

(WC) INSANE WORKER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8(A), Spirit d10, Strength d8+2, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8+2, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 8

Gear: Molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2)

Special Abilities:

- * **Berserk:** As per the Edge. Modifiers to Traits are included in his stats.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Improved Frenzy:** Can make 2 Fighting attacks each round at no penalty.

STORAGE

The storage facility contains everything the staff needed except for food, which is stored in the recreation area (p. 14). Most of the supplies are very mundane, and comprise

bedding, clothes, writing paper, specimen bags and containers, chemicals for preserving finds, tape, shovels, and so on. However, there are a few special items.

FEATURES

Explosives: Contained in a locked crate are 10 explosive charges and two remote detonators. A quick glance reveals the crate could hold a maximum of 24 charges. The crate can be opened with a Lockpicking roll or smashing or shooting the lock (Toughness 10).

SBAC 25mm: Despite being a civilian organization, the scientists had a SBAC 25mm autocannon. The Ruber Desert is home to many dangerous predators, not to mention Union facilities. There are 3 magazines for the autocannon. The autocannon is concealed beneath a tarpaulin.

THE TOMB COMPLEX

In this section the heroes enter the Zal tomb and make some remarkable discoveries. It should be noted that aside from the skeletal robots there is nothing to truly link the Zal with the current Rephaim threat plaguing Salus.

INTERNAL DESIGN

None of the chambers in the tomb are actually touching each other—this is intentional. The tomb is not actually a single locale on Salus, but rather numerous chambers scattered beneath the planet's surface. The canyon chamber is just the front door, the Zal equivalent of a railway station. The portals in the disparate chambers (see below) are teleporters.

When the base was in full working order, the doors appeared as solid metal, just like the main door. A Zal or robot simply thought about the destination, the metal dissolved to reveal the inky blackness, and the traveler walked through, appearing at his destination instantly. The doors were also capable of accepting multiple passengers at once—two Zal, each seeking a different chamber, could use a portal simultaneously and would appear where they desired.

Since the great battle screwed up the tomb's power systems, though, the doors have become scrambled and open into a random location each time.

When the characters enter any door, draw a card and check below to see where they appear. If they enter within one round, all the heroes appear in the same location. Otherwise, different groups of characters draw their own card. It may take an age for them to return to the entrance chamber, and there may be rooms they don't visit because of this. Patience and determination will see them through.

It is very easy for the heroes to become separated, as intended, so the WM must keep track of each group's location.

Worse, just because you enter a door in the "north" wall of one room does not mean you'll appear in the "south" door at your destination, as you would in a conventional building. Compass directions mean nothing in the tomb, so never describe doors in terms of cardinal points. If you use floor plans for a battle, put them down in any direction you want. Let the players worry about compass directions and things like, "How did I go north but come out east?"

Card Result

Deuce	Door malfunctions. Each individual using the door draws a card to see where he ends up, even if the Knights use the door in the same round
3	Entrance Chamber (page 38)
4	Astronomical Chamber (page 38)
5	Hibernation Chamber (page 39)
6	Repair Chamber (page 39)
7	Armory (page 40)
8	Communications Suite (page 41)
9	Conference Room (page 42)
10	Powerplant (page 42)
Jack-Ace	Empty Room (page 43)
Joker	The doors work as intended. If a hero vocalizes that he wants to go to a certain room, even accidentally ("We need to find the powerplant," for example) then that's where the portal leads.

INTERNAL DOORS

Communication: All of the doorways indicated are inky black portals, through which nothing can be seen using low light, infrared, or visible light. Neither do ID scanners penetrate them—within the tomb an ID scanner only works on ID tags in the same room. The blackness defies any form of sensory investigation

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(natural or artificial). Don't let the characters waste too much time trying to deduce something far beyond their understanding.

The *only* way to communicate with someone on the other side of a portal is through a headset communicator. Visual feedback is possible through a mobile command center. In both cases, the feedback is heavily distorted.

A Knight wishing to use his commander's Leadership Edges draws cards as normal for using the MCC. However, he must then make an immediate Notice roll (based on hearing). With success, he may use the Edges as normal. A failure means he cannot hear the commands properly and does not receive the Edges—he has delayed for nothing.

Touching a Door: Touching a door causes it to give slightly, like pushing through thick syrup. To bare skin the blackness feels icy cold (causes no harm) but there is no physical sensation of actually touching anything—the dense fluid gives, but the character cannot feel that happening.

Walking Through: A character can walk through a door with only a slight effort. On passing through, the hero is momentarily disoriented, as if he has been deprived of all his senses. He experiences a terrifying sensation of falling before he appears on the other side Shaken. Each door can accommodate a maximum of two people at once.

A character who sticks just a limb through can feel nothing on the other side. Should he stick just his head through to try and see what is on the far side, he feels intensely sick and must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken and suffer a level of Fatigue for ten minutes. This can lead to Incapacitation, but not Death. The Knight also sees nothing—he has total sensory deprivation and the feeling of falling into a bottomless pit of absolute nothing.

Should the Knights rope themselves together, the rope is immediately severed when a person passes through a portal. Likewise, if holding hands, they are pulled apart by an irresistible force once the entirety of the first person is through the door. Holding onto a gun barrel while a comrade holds the butt slices the weapon in half, ruining the gun. In short, there is *no* way to maintain physical contact with folk on the other side of a door.

Temporary Failure: The system is prone to constant malfunction. Whenever a deuce is actually used for a combatant's action (deuces rejected by characters with Quick and Level Headed are thus ignored), the doors across the

entire tomb cease functioning for the entire round. They open at the start of the following round, assuming no deuce is used that round.

While malfunctioning, the doors become totally impassable (though they remain inky black holes) and all communication between separate chambers is lost.

ROBOTS

The skeletal robots within the tomb are not stupid. If the Knights run away, the robots follow—their orders are to exterminate any non-Zal they encounter. Since there is only a single door in each chamber, actually escaping them is rather difficult if the robots enter the same portal as the Knights during the same round. Otherwise, the sentinels enter a random room when they use the portal, just like the Knights.

ENTRANCE TUNNEL

The entrance tunnel measures 12 yards by 12 yards (or 6" by 6") and extends for over 20 yards into the cliff face before ending at the door. As mentioned in the logs, there is no evidence of any joins or welds, giving the impression of the tunnel being a single piece of metal. The walls are resistant to any weapons the heroes possess, even Heavy Weapons.

Along both walls, engravings show a legion of skeletal warriors marching to war, heading out of the tunnel, while overhead fly what appear to be small aircraft or starships of unusual design. Beneath some of the images are lines of strange glyphs, perhaps some form of writing. It bares no resemblance to any language you know or have seen before. A thin layer of red dust, blown in during the storm, covers the first dozen yards of the floor.

Let the heroes spend time investigating here if they want. There is nothing of interest to discover, though. The dust shows no signs of having being disturbed, being blown in after the robots marched on the camp to combat the Knights.

THE DOOR

After 20 yards or so, the tunnel abruptly ends. The back wall appears to be part of the tunnel, yet it has different markings. Thin, concentric lines, slight ellipses rather than perfect circles, radiate out from a central semi-circular indentation about an inch wide. Positioned along each circle,

seemingly at random, is a single semi-circular protrusion. These vary in size but are all smaller than the central one.

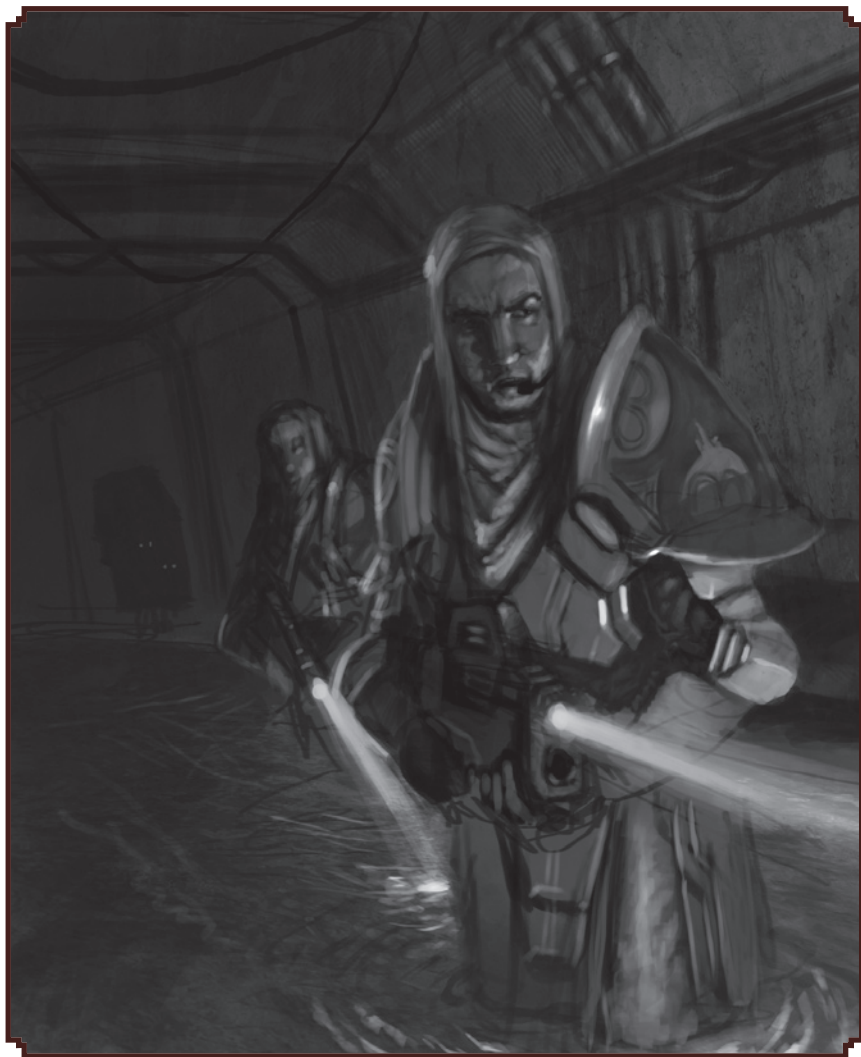
Scattered across the door, seemingly in random fashion, though perhaps passing for someone's idea of order, are more glyphs, similar to those on the walls.

The circles and their protrusions represent planets and their orbits, while the central indentation is a star. This is, in fact, the Salus system as it appeared eons ago. Several planets vanished during the war, blown to pieces by

the awesome firepower of both races, while several shifted orbit, making the pattern largely unrecognizable.

What is of most importance is the central indentation. The metallic disc found in Davis' quarters, fits neatly into this. When placed in there, indentations face down toward the door, read the following text.

The disc appears to melt as you place it in the indentation, becoming simply part of the door. Suddenly, the door itself begins to



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dissolve, starting in the center and almost flowing outward. Within a few seconds, all sign of the door has vanished.

Beyond, all is in darkness. A faint musty smell wafts through the air, drawn outward by the howling gale outside. No sounds can be heard.

The door remains open for just one minute (ten rounds) before sealing again. For the first 9 rounds anyone can walk through. However, on the final round, the metal begins to flow from the walls to seal the passage.

Any character who decides to enter on the round the door is closing must make an Agility roll at -2 to get through in time. With failure, part of him has become trapped in the door. Don't roll for damage. Instead, roll on the Injury Table. A result of Arm (3-4) or Leg (10) means the character's limb is severed and the victim is immediately Incapacitated. Anything else instantly kills the poor sap (no Vigor roll to survive is allowed).

Once the door seals shut, the central indentation is again hollow, the disc they inserted having vanished. Any characters left on the outside must wait until those on the inside learn how to open the door from there.

Should no one enter, the Knights have screwed up big time. The tomb becomes nigh impregnable once the door seals (it takes the Church nearly a decade to breach the walls). Finish the adventure now.

Leaving the tomb is easy—simply touching the door causes it to disappear as noted above.

ENTRANCE CHAMBER

This large, vaulted chamber lies silent. Standing in the center, reaching to the ceiling, is a large, square, metal pillar. On each face is a door-sized void of inky darkness. The walls of the chamber are engraved with images like those in the tunnel.

The entrance chamber is quite literally that—a way into the tomb. Of course, the Zal were wise enough to leave guardians. After a few rounds of exploring, read the following.

As you examine the chamber, several skeletal robots appear from nowhere, as if stepping out of some invisible portal.

The robots are held in stasis elsewhere (actually in a pocket dimension unreachable by any means in this adventure) and teleport in when sensors are activated. Check for Surprise as normal. Place the robots as equally as possible

around the walls. There is little useful cover, save for the pillar. Fortunately, it is indestructible (by any weapons possessed in the adventure), so characters in Cover cannot be attacked through it.

ROBOT SKELETONS (1 PER CHARACTER)

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Gear: Plasma rifle (Range: 24/48/96; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; Shots unlimited in hands of robot; AP 2, HW) with blade attachment (Str+d8+2, AP 4, requires 2 hands)

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +4:** Tough metallic structure.
- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to poison and disease.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Redundant Systems:** A robot is very hard to keep down. Whenever one is wounded by any means other than a Called Shot to the head, area effect attack, or Heavy Weapon, draw a card from the action deck. A red card indicates the robot is disabled as normal and out of the fight. A black card (or Joker) means the robot ignores the damage from the attack.
- * **Teleport:** When the robot is killed by any means other than a Called Shot to the head or an area effect weapon, an emergency teleporter activates. This instantly transports the thing back to the nearest base (in this case the tomb). This was a basic safety feature to prevent Zal technology falling back into enemy hands. The robots cannot voluntarily activate this system.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Robots halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.

ASTRONOMICAL CHAMBER

This chamber is illuminated in bright white light, originating from a swirling globe in the center of the room. The object appears to be a large white star, complete with miniature solar flares erupting. Orbiting it at various distances are eight bodies.

A small object spewing a tail of debris behind it, possibly a comet, is approaching the furthest world.

The spheres are holograms. While the star generates light, it radiates no heat.

The star at the center is a white giant (classification A0 II). The solar system displayed is that of Salus, though the current star which shines in the heavens now is an F2 III. As stated in *Necropolis*, the star underwent some sort of change—the transformation of the white star being a result of weapons of godlike power. The black hole is an artificial creation.

The eight bodies represent the Salus solar system before the final battle. They appear as three small rocky bodies of varying sizes nearest the sun, a large gas giant, a large rocky world (actually Salus), a small gas giant, a verdant world, and a large rocky planet (now an asteroid field).

Back when the base was built, Salus was a hot world with minimal life and water found only beneath the surface. The major inhabited world at the time was actually the second most distant world. The outer world was also colonized, but suffered extensive damage during the battle and is now an asteroid field. The large gas giant (Incus) no longer exists in the form shown here, for it orbits New Sol as a dense, metallic sphere stripped of its atmosphere.

Despite these changes, the system is recognizable through the type of star matching early scientific data and the location of the gas giants. Any hero passing a Common Knowledge roll deduces it is the Salus system in an earlier incarnation, but there is no hope of dating it.

The chamber once served as an early warning system. It mapped the heavens in real time (thus the planets actually orbit the sun in real time and even spin on their axis) and displayed any foreign objects, such as enemy starships or even rogue asteroids. It still functions for this purpose, despite the planets being images of how they were, not how they are. Once back in the world, a Knight who makes enquiries about the comet is told that one is indeed entering the system above the plane of the asteroid field, but it is currently too faint to see with the naked eye because of its approach vector.

HIBERNATION CHAMBER

This hexagonal chamber stands on two levels. The level on which you enter is a raised platform above the ground floor. Markings on the walls are broken down into six distinct zones. Each appears to relate in

some way to a single figure, perhaps one of the original builders. The aliens are vaguely human in appearance, though as a stylized representation it is hard to be sure of their true nature. Whoever they are, the figures are obviously important, for they wear ceremonial headdresses and are shown in striking poses.

Stairs lead down to the lower level, in which lie six metal sarcophagi arranged in a star formation from a central hexagonal hub. The hub reaches to the ceiling and, like other features you have seen, appears to be part of the ceiling and floor rather than a separate structure. Long cables join the hub to each sarcophagus and winking lights and glowing glyphs can be seen on each face.

The lights on the hub blink in seemingly random patterns. The sarcophagi are hibernation pods for the Zal. Each one has malfunctioned, and the occupants are long mummified through natural processes.

Opening the pods is an impossible task, but there is a way to see the occupants. The solid metal surface becomes transparent if touched, revealing the grisly contents.

The instant you touch the lid, the surface becomes transparent. Inside, lying as if asleep, its arms crossed over its chest, is an elongated humanoid creature, perhaps seven feet in height, with a high forehead. It is clearly mummified, though whether from natural processes or some dark necromancy is unclear—it certainly has the appearance of a greater mummy, complete with ceremonial regalia [This assumes the heroes have encountered one of these Rephaim.]

The heroes have no way of actually checking if the occupants are truly dead, as opposed to Rephaim. Let them worry about this as they continue to explore the tomb.

REPAIR CHAMBER

GM Note: Any robots not killed by a Called Shot to the head, area affect attack, or Heavy Weapon teleport back to this chamber. There are always two robots present (to shove wrecks into the niches).

Draw a card for each robot destroyed at the archaeological facility. A red card means it is repaired and active. A black card means it is in a niche, awaiting repair (the repair chamber

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is not functioning as well as it should). Jokers indicate the robot was too badly damaged for the faulty chamber to make repairs.

Note that any Incapacitated robots killed in this chamber disappear for a round and then reappear the next round still in pieces.

The metallic walls of this chamber are dotted with smooth, man-sized niches, some of which contain robot skeletons. A number of robots are also present. They turn, leveling their guns at you.

The niches are repair bays for damaged robots. When a robot enters or is placed in a niche, an invisible forcefield activates, pinning the construct inside. Appendages with welders, cutters, and other appliances then “grow” from the walls and begin repair work.

Should a curious human enter one of the niches, he too is trapped by the forcefield. The appendages can’t tell flesh from metal, and so get to work repairing him. The victim takes 2d10 damage before the forcefield lifts and he is freed. There is no way to free the victim, the forcefield being impenetrable to any weapons the Knights possess.

ROBOT SKELETONS (2+)

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Gear: Plasma rifle (Range: 24/48/96; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; Shots unlimited in hands of robot; AP 2, HW) with blade attachment (Str+d8+2, AP 4, requires 2 hands)

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +4:** Tough metallic structure.
- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to poison and disease.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Redundant Systems:** A robot is very hard to keep down. Whenever one is wounded by any means other than a Called Shot to the head, area effect attack, or Heavy Weapon, draw a card from the action deck. A red card indicates the robot is disabled as normal and out of the fight. A black card (or Joker) means the robot ignores the damage from the attack.
- * **Teleport:** When the robot is killed by any means other than a Called Shot to the head or an area effect weapon, an emergency teleporter activates. This

instantly transports the thing back to the nearest base (in this case the tomb). This was a basic safety feature to prevent Zal technology falling back into enemy hands. The robots cannot voluntarily activate this system.

- * **Thermal Vision:** Robots halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.

ARMORY

A metallic, egg-shaped dome sits squarely in the center of this chamber. It is covered in glowing symbols. Across the room, four skeletal robots suddenly appear out of thin air!

The first time the Knights enter this chamber, the guardians activate. The egg makes great Cover, being impervious to all the weapons available in this adventure.

Once the heroes get a chance to examine the egg, they discover an indent in the shape of a thin right hand, with five sensors on the fingertips. Placing the hand of a robot still connected to the torso (the power supply) in the indentation activates the armory.

The majority of the “shell” flows into the floor, leaving being just the part with the hand indentation and a raised dais on which lie 20 small cylinders (warp grenades), 15 plasma rifles (which the Knights can’t actually use), and a dozen discs similar to the one they used to gain entrance to the tomb. Used discs reappear here—one of these is the disc Davis found. Taking the discs is important if the Knights ever want to return to the tomb in the future.

Removing the hand automatically reforms the protective shell.

ROBOT SKELETONS (4)

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Gear: Plasma rifle (Range: 24/48/96; Damage: 3d6; ROF 1; Shots unlimited in hands of robot; AP 2, HW) with blade attachment (Str+d8+2, AP 4, requires 2 hands)

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +4:** Tough metallic structure.
- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to poison and disease.

- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Redundant Systems:** A robot is very hard to keep down. Whenever one is wounded by any means other than a Called Shot to the head, area effect attack, or Heavy Weapon, draw a card from the action deck. A red card indicates the robot is disabled as normal and out of the fight. A black card (or Joker) means the robot ignores the damage from the attack.
- * **Teleport:** When the robot is killed by any means other than a Called Shot to the head or an area effect weapon, an emergency teleporter activates. This instantly transports the thing back to the nearest base (in this case the tomb). This was a basic safety feature to prevent Zal technology falling back into enemy hands. The robots cannot voluntarily activate this system.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Robots halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.

WARP GRENADES

Warp grenades have a Range of 5/10/20 and must be thrown. On impact they generate a dimensional warp field filling a Medium Burst Template. Anything in the template suffers 3d10 damage (AP 100, Heavy Weapon).

Incapacitated vehicles and Extras simply vanish, transported to an alternate dimension (actually the one inhabited by the Dark). Wild Cards must check for Incapacitation as normal. However, *all* injuries are permanent, the affected limb being dimensionally severed. As such, any injury except an Arm or Leg kills the victim outright.

Note that if the Template touches but does not completely enclose an object, such as a large vehicle or a building, only the part destroyed within the template is teleported (though this counts as destroying the vehicle). This can result in the object having a very neat circular chunk missing.

There are a total of 20 grenades, but many are faulty through excessive age. Whenever a grenade is used, draw a card from the action deck. A black card means the device malfunctions. It does not explode, but instead teleports itself to the alternate dimension. There is *no* way to fix faulty grenades or determine in advance which ones are functional.

COMMUNICATION SUITE

Dominating the center of this chamber is a floating orb of silvery light about six feet across. Within, you can just make out a reclining chair, molded seamlessly into the floor as if growing from the cold metal.

The orb is harmless and can be passed through safely. On the right arm of the chair are four buttons arranged in a diamond pattern, while on the left is a single button. None are labeled.

SITTING DOWN

If a Knight sits in the chair, read the following text.

As you sit down, the globe alters, losing its silvery appearance and instead representing a star map of the heavens. Dotted across the map are numerous red dots of light. The lights project from the map, stopping a few inches from the chair, and leaving them within easy reach.

The map is visible from both sides of the globe. A hero making a Common Knowledge roll at -2 realizes the galactic map is from the viewpoint of Salus, effectively placing it at the center of the galaxy.

The diamond-patterned buttons on the chair allow the character to rotate the star chart around the chair. Pressing multiple buttons, such as "up" and "right", moves the view diagonally in the appropriate direction. Using opposite buttons simultaneously obviously means the map doesn't move. The left arm button does nothing until a planetary view is activated (see below). Pushing it shifts back to the star map. To deactivate the star map, one must simply vacate the chair.

RED BEAM ACTIVATED

Read on if a red beam is touched.

The orb changes again, this time showing the surface of a planet. Small golden symbols can be seen on the surface, the light from each again projecting toward the chair.

The buttons now rotate the view of the planet.

GOLDEN BEAM ACTIVATED

Should a hero touch a golden beam, read the following.

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Suddenly the quiet is broken by a harsh disembodied voice, which seems to originate from the globe. It speaks for a few seconds before falling silent.

The language is meaningless to the heroes and, without some sort of key in a known language, cannot be translated.

TRUE PURPOSE

Each red dot on the star map represents a world formerly controlled by the Zal. The planet is a 3D rotating view of the actual world, though many of these worlds no longer exist—each image is millions of years old. Each golden symbol is a former Zal base or colony on that world.

When one was indicated by touching the symbol, the globe altered again to show the communication suite at the other end. Instant communication across vast distances was possible through dimensional travel, an advanced version of the principles used in FC Drives. However, with the destruction of these bases there is no receiver. The voice is simply telling the activator no communications link can be achieved.

FINDING EARTH

Heroes who want to find Earth must make a Common Knowledge roll at -2. With success, they locate the general area of the Sol system. Sure enough, there is a red dot there. Touching it does not produce an image of Earth, though, but of Mars.

At this time, Mars is not the barren red desert men of Earth knew. There are oceans, clear signs of major rivers and deltas, and even evidence of forests. Only the presence of Mount Olympus and the red sand gives it away as Mars. There is a single golden symbol on the surface, though it takes a Common Knowledge roll at -4 to know it centers on a region formerly known as Cydonia.

A hero who knows the location can, if the player knows anything on the subject, discuss the ramifications of the "Face on Mars" and supposed pyramids which lie nearby. Although colonists thoroughly surveyed the region and found nothing artificial, rumors of alien life on Mars never truly ceased. Otherwise, it is very unlikely a 24th century holy warrior with more pressing matters knows anything of these old legends. (GMs may look up the visual phenomena on the internet and create a handout if they feel it is appropriate—while interesting, it has no relevance to the *Necropolis* setting.)

CONFERENCE ROOM

Aside from a large circle surrounded by smaller circles etched onto the floor, the room is completely barren.

Anytime a hero moves adjacent to a small circle, a metallic chair grows seamlessly from the floor within the circle. When the first chair forms, the larger circle flows to form a circular table supported on a single pillar. Moving away from a chair causes it to merge back into the floor. When the last chair is gone, the table does likewise. Crossing through a square occupied by a chair or the table counts as difficult ground.

The room was nothing more than a conference center for the Zal before they went into hibernation.

POWERPLANT

Rising from a bottomless pit are a pair of gigantic energy coils, which crackle and glow with untold power. Surrounding each is a wide walkway, linked by a much narrower span. The bridge looks very thin and has no support structures. At the far end of the colossal room, beyond the second coil, you can just make out blinking lights.

CRACK! Two bolts of electricity suddenly arc from one of the towers, one slamming into the floor nearby and the other striking a distant wall, leaving scorch marks. Fortunately the strange metal is non-conductive.

No sooner has the arc struck, you notice a swarm of small beetle-like robots scurry up over the lip of the pit and begin bustling around the tarnished floor. Within seconds, there is no sign of any scorch mark and the swarm scurries away across the bridge to where another bolt of lightning has just struck.

Despite appearances, the bridge can support several hundred tons with ease. The small robots are maintenance robots. They are programmed to fight only in self-defense, serving otherwise to make repairs as necessary. Unfortunately, the damage the base took millions of years ago is more than they can handle. At best, they are maintaining the powerplant's stability. There are effectively an infinite number of swarms, though only one at a time is ever activated.

The powerplant has a slight imbalance in its energy coils. Each round the squad remains here, deal every hero and the maintenance

swarm a card. A black face card indicates he has been struck by electricity, suffering 2d10 damage. Characters who suffer a wound while on the bridge or a square adjacent to the pit must make an Agility roll or fall to their death. Adjacent characters who have not acted (if you're in combat rounds) may make an Agility roll at -2 to catch their comrade. A Strength roll is required to haul them back onto the platform.

In the event a hero is dumb enough to lob a warp grenade into the pit, draw a card from the action deck. A Joker indicates the dimensional bubble severed a vital link and caused a core breach. Alarms begin blaring across the base, the powerplant immediately becomes a high radiation zone, and one round after the grenade is thrown the door seals—permanently. Thirty minutes later, everything within 50 miles of the powerplant's location (which is located beneath the north pole) is vaporized in an antimatter explosion.

Worse, at least for those not in the powerplant room when it detonates, the loss of the power source shuts down the teleport system. The heroes are trapped with *absolutely no hope* of escape. Death comes when the air runs out of the chambers in a few hours.

Anyone who jumps into the pit automatically dies after freefalling for 10 miles into the planet's core, where the actual reactor lies.

MAINTENANCE ROBOT SWARM

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4(A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 9(2)

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +2:** Metallic structure.
- * **Attack:** Maintenance swarms inflict hundreds of tiny cuts and burns every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4 damage to everyone in the template (victims in completely sealed suits are immune). They only attack in self-defense, though.
- * **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to poison and disease.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Split:** These swarms are clever enough to split into two smaller swarms (Small Burst Templates) should their foes split up. The Toughness of these smaller swarms is

lowered by -2 (to 7(2) each).

- * **Swarm:** Parry +2; Because the swarm is composed of scores, hundreds, or thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round. Swarms are usually foiled by jumping in water.

- * **Thermal Vision:** Robots halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.

EMPTY ROOMS

These chambers are either unfinished or no longer function properly. Either way, there is nothing in them of interest. If the face card which lead them here is black, 1d4 skeletal robots teleports in to attack the occupants.

Robot Skeletons (1d4): See page 40.



PLAYER HANDOUT #1: MISSION BRIEFING

Date: 28.IV.2351, 0630 Zulu.

Good morning, Knights. Take your seats quickly and listen up.

We've lost contact with a research station out in the Ruber Desert in Terra Infernalis. Last routine contact was due four days ago but failed to arrive. Under standard operating procedures, that's flagged an alarm. Technically these guys are in unclaimed territory, but they're Church researchers working for the Office of Archaeological Research, so they're entitled to help. We're near and available, so we get the job of investigating.

Intense solar flares have been plaguing Salus for weeks now, and this is probably nothing more than a fried comms relay. Still, there is a chance of a chemical spillage or outbreak of disease. Whatever the cause, you're to go there and sort things out.

Details about the facility and key personnel are available in a portable aide, which the Senior Knight can collect after the briefing.

Your team call sign is Viper. The Senior Knight is Viper 1. Assign other numbers as you see fit. The dropship call sign for this drop is Broadsword. Despite the comms jamming, you should be able to use your headset radios up to their maximum range.

Broadsword's broad-spectrum comms array should be good for up to 50 miles, weather permitting. Anything beyond that is in the hands of the Almighty.

Enemy Forces: You're operating in unclaimed territory, but far behind the frontlines. There've never been any reports of Rephaim activity in our rear zones, but you know the drill—be prepared for anything. At worst, it's a major hazmat incident. Then again, it could be there's some sort of civil disturbance going on, and you'll have a few dozen cabin fevered scientists to pacify. Just remember these guys are on our side.

Support: Rephaim activity along the front and the current solar conditions are severely limiting our resources. You'll be dropped in by Pedael. Only jump seats are installed, so don't expect a smooth ride.

While you secure the site and begin preliminary operations, the Pedael will return to base and collect a HARD shelter, just in case you need it. Round trip should be a few hours, so until she returns you'll be on your own.

Since the Preceptory Master has declared this a rescue operation, a lance of eight specialist sergeants is waiting for you by the dropship. There are two medics, two technicians, and four infantrymen for routine duties. A Sergeant Commander has been appointed to act as your liaison with the squad. You'll find their service records on file.

Equipment: Collect requisition forms for a field surgery kit and one portable welder each. Other than that, it's a standard weapons load. You might want your shields, just in case the locals have gone nuts and started a riot. Damn researchers. Any question? Good, then get your butts moving, people! God speed!

PLAYER HANDOUT #2: RESEARCH FACILITY DATA

Data Requested: Mining Facility #324-RD-04-Epsilon. Codename: Mars Station.

Authorization Code: IntSec Rating 128n+0, non-secured data. Sec-Encryp accepted.

Commence data stream.

Location: Ruber Desert, Terra Infernalis. Sector 7G, grid Omega-87-Beta.

History: Mars Station is a research facility operated by the Office of Antiquities.

Construction completed 31.II.2348 in Ruber Desert, close to the Labyrinthus Angelus (see attached Data Link). Mission plan to survey and record archaeological finds from possible first colony landings, circa 2130.

Key Personnel: Base Coordinator Terrance Wright, facility manager. Father Joshua De Plume, spiritual advisor, dispatched by Cardinal Matisse at request of Archbishop Francis Hawke (Personnel File sealed by orders of CIS). Chief Naomi Running Hare, ex-mercenary cleared to operate in Church dominion by CIS, security chief. Doctor Henrietta Stamp, chief archaeologist, volunteered for service following death of spouse (Car crash, 01.VII.2350).

Other Personnel: 10 other personnel—Facility Services (2), Technicians (2), Archaeologists (2), Diggers (4). Last census posted with Offices of Census and Public Records 042.I.2351. No addenda.

Key Structures: Archaeological laboratory, communication suite, medical center, recreation center, solar power station with enhanced capacitors and external relay station, storage bays, chapel, habitation block, four command staff habitats. Landing pad rated to Category Beta-Six, capable of supporting Angel-class dropships. See attached satellite image, dated 13.III.2350.

All facilities are standard Church prefabricated constructions built in accordance with Statute 19A.41.D4 of the Office of Industry's Codex of Building Regulations (see attached Data Link).

Vehicles: One Damocles Industries' Model 3000G Industrial Crawler. Level 1 Industrial Driving License required for operation. Deemed roadworthy vehicle under Office of Vehicles Statute 125G-99.

Attachments

Data Link <Labyrinthus Angelus>: Large natural geological structure created by water erosion millions of years ago. Named for the low, singing sound caused by winds blowing from the north. Intersecting valley network studied by Office of Beatification and declared natural, probably caused by rock structure and geological makeup.

Data Link <Ruber Desert >: Barren and arid region of reddish sand and rocks, spanning much of Terra Infernalis. Has many similarities to Old Sol 4 (Mars). Dunes can reach heights of 300 yards. Entrance into desert recommended only by holders of Class 2 Survival skills training.

Data Link <Statute 19A.41.D4 >: Structures are to be shielded against small arms fire and low-impact collisions. Structures must have airlock doors to prevent contamination by particular matter. Structures must be capable of withstanding high winds and particular erosion for a period of 50 Salus years.

End data stream

PLAYER HANDOUT #3: COMMANDER'S LOG

<18.IV.2351>

Davis and Redburn still digging in Labyrinthus Angelus near ancient rockslide. I think they're hunting for fossils again. Must remind them of our mission brief over dinner.

<19.IV.2351>

Davis and Redburn excited over find in Labyrinthus Angelus. Henrietta informs me it contains bone, possibly of some ancient beast. Strange she said bone and not fossilized deposit. I'll ask her in the morning.

<20.IV.2351>

Minor earth tremor in region last night—no damage. D&R radioed in to report spectacular find but gave no details. Am taking a team to investigate with all haste. Father David has asked to come along—might be of some use, I suppose, the old drunk.

<Supplemental>

Dear God. Found sign of intelligent life from at least a million or more years ago. Earthquake cleared the landslide D&R were investigating, revealing metal tunnel going back into the canyon wall. No visible joints or welds—seemingly molded from a single piece. Fascinating! Solar flares still screwing up radio, so can't call this in. Not sure I want to yet.

Entrance cleared shortly before dusk. Father David stayed behind with two of the team to begin preliminary mapping of tunnel while I returned to formulate proper plan—tunnel engraved with strange runes and symbols, as well as pictures. Clear indications of intelligent life. Images show what appear to be army of skeletons marching to war!

The end of the tunnel sealed with what could be a door. No visible lock or handle, but strange engravings. Dismissed talk of using explosives or cutting torches to avoid damaging valuable artifact.

Henrietta says bone could be of human origin. I've asked her to be 100% sure before we make any announcement. Still no radio comms.

<21.IV.2351>

Father David returned to camp with others this morning for full briefing but promptly locked himself in chapel. Team says he was ranting about "demons" all night and trying to stop them from examining the door. Bad sort—shall request a transfer for him.

Leaving skeleton crew (no pun) in the camp while rest investigate site in more detail. Henrietta's news very exciting, but no time to think about that now.

<22.IV.2351>

All attempts to penetrate door failed, so organized a thorough recording of the tunnels with full IR and UV spectrographs. Densimeter readings indicate metal thin but immensely strong—ideal for more machines of war! Team returned to base. Carter told me he heard strange noises, but none of the others could verify his claims. Idiots left recording gear at the site! Still, we'll be back in the morning. Hell, we'll probably be in this wasteland for years studying this find! We'll be famous!

Meeting Henrietta for dinner in hour to discuss recent events. We need to handle this carefully to protect our reputations and stop any panic in the Curia.

<23.IV.2351>

[Four days ago] No entry

PLAYER HANDOUT #4: CHIEF ARCHAEOLOGIST'S LOG

<19.IV.2351>

Davis and Redburn returned from the Labyrinthus Angelus today with what may turn out to be a remarkable find. They brought a lump of rock measuring 36" by 19". It is rough and irregular but seems at first glance to match the geological composition of the canyon walls.

At first I was going to rebuke them for wasting my time, but Redburn quickly pointed out a reddish-white protuberance. A quick examination revealed what I had originally thought was crystal, as bone. Not a fossil, but actual bone! It goes back into the rock and appears to be totally encased, ruling out a hoax by my esteemed colleagues.

Davis, a trained geologist, informed me the rock was found under a landslide dated to around a million years ago. Whatever the bone belongs to, it must have been crushed by loose stone a thousand millennia ago and slowly encrusted. Probably some unfortunate animal.

<20.IV.2351>

X-ray analysis has revealed not just a sliver of bone, but what appears to be a complete torso and pair of arms. Preliminary findings indicate it is a close match to our own skeleton! Dear Lord, if this is human, then how did it get here a million years ago? If it's alien, it could indicate life on Earth did not begin as we were taught. Astounding! Better tell Wright.

Wright informs me comms are still down, so he can't get a message to Cardinal Beavor. Thank God—something tells me this will be hushed up and declared a relic so as to avoid those unwanted questions that plague my mind. I must learn more before this find reaches the Cardinal's ears and we lose control.

I shall break away the surrounding rock using a sonic probe and clean up the skeleton (should I call it that?) for study.

<21.IV.2351>

It isn't bone at all—it's metal! Chemical composition defies the spectrograph and densitometer, but it is definitely not a living organism. Some sort of robot by the looks of it, but who built it and why does it resemble a human? Maybe we should contact a Corporation and sell this? The Church sure won't give us a bonus.

Fingers on right hand have electrodes—reason unknown, as the left hand is clear, but it could be a recharge point. Musculature (if that's the right word) would appear to give it similar strength to a healthy human—nothing superhuman, so probably a menial worker droid, but there is an amazing level of redundancy. Suspect it worked in a hazardous environment.

Conclusion based on metallurgy and age—robot definitely not built by human hands, thus leaving aliens as the only possible source. I pity the Curia having to debate this!

<22.IV.2351>

Finally gained access to the torso compartment—the metal casing is tougher than ceramic armor but much lighter. This could open up new advances for our Knights.

Chest cavity contains three separate power units of unknown origin—no residual power spikes. Looks like the power supplies can be fed from our mains supply with some tinkering, though there is little guarantee power will be transferred. A million years is a long time to have a dead battery. Will let it charge while I go for dinner.

Wright has promised me a decent meal for a change.

<23.IV.2351>

[Four days ago] No entry

PLAYER HANDOUT #5: ARCHAEOLOGIST'S EMAIL

To: Cardinal Howe, Office of Sports & Leisure

From: Davis, P; Mars Station

Date: 21.IV.2351.

Encryption: 64E+2, Church standard encryption code

Subject: Collection

Your Excellency,

I've found something of interest you might want to add to your private collection. While digging in the Labyrinthus Angelus I uncovered a metallic disc, about an inch across, marked with strange glyphs. It has a low intrinsic value, but it is undoubtedly over a million years old and crafted by intelligent hands!

As always, you have first refusal on anything of value I find. However, given the unique nature of such a find, I'd like to suggest a price of 1,000,000M. This is subject to negotiation, as always.

May the light guide you!

I remain your servant,

Pete Davis, Archaeologist
Office of Archaeology

SERGEANT CHARACTER SHEETS

TECHNICAL SERGEANT AMELIA ZANGOROVICH

Personality: Creative

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d4, Guts d6, Investigation d6, Notice d6, Repair d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: 0; Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 9 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: McGyver

Gear: Light armor (+4), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), flechette pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, AP 2, Semi-auto), 3 mags, ID tag, toolkit

Fatigue: -1 -2 Inc

MEDICAL SERGEANT WAYNE SMITH

Personality: Young

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Guts d6, Healing d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d6, Taunt d6

Charisma: 0; Pace: 6; Parry: 2; Toughness: 9 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Strong Willed

Gear: Light armor (+4), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), flechette pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, AP 2, Semi-auto), 3 mags, ID tag, medikit

Fatigue: -1 -2 Inc

TECHNICAL SERGEANT MAXIMILIAN VON BRUDER

Personality: Cruel

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d4, Guts d6, Investigation d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Repair d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: 0; Pace: 6; Parry: 4; Toughness: 9 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Technically Inclined

Gear: Light armor (+4), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), flechette pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, AP 2, Semi-auto), 3 mags, ID tag, toolkit

Fatigue: -1 -2 Inc

MEDICAL SERGEANT NATASHA PECHOVA

Personality: Lazy

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Guts d6, Healing d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: 0; Pace: 6; Parry: 2; Toughness: 9 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Medic

Gear: Light armor (+4), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), flechette pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, AP 2, Semi-auto), 3 mags, ID tag, medikit

Fatigue: -1 -2 Inc

SERGEANT CHARACTER SHEETS

SERGEANT DIRK PETARD

Personality: Mysterious

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6+2,
Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Charisma: 0; Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 9 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Alertness

Gear: Light armor (+4), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), flechette
SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2, Auto), 3 mags, ID tag

Fatigue: -1 -2 Inc

SERGEANT COMMANDER ELIZABETH STRYDE

Personality: Bright

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Repair
d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Charisma: 0; Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 9 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Command

Gear: Light armor (+4), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), flechette
SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2, Auto), 3 mags, ID tag

Fatigue: -1 -2 Inc

SERGEANT ALFRED GRANT

Personality: Gung Ho

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6,
Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Survival d6

Charisma: 0; Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 10 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Brawny

Gear: Light armor (+4), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), flechette
SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2, Auto), 3 mags, ID tag

Fatigue: -1 -2 Inc

SERGEANT DAVIS MIRTH

Personality: Heroic

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Climbing d4, Driving d4, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6,
Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d4, Survival d6

Charisma: 0; Pace: 8; Parry: 5; Toughness: 9 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Fleet Footed

Gear: Light armor (+4), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), flechette
SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, AP 2, Auto), 3 mags, ID tag

Fatigue: -1 -2 Inc

THE BROKEN SEAL

WAR MASTER'S NOTES

Welcome to *The Broken Seal*, a standalone scenario written for the *Necropolis* campaign setting.

WARNING: *This adventure deals with mature themes and may not be suitable for players below the age of 13. Adults gaming with younger players should use their discretion.*

If you intend to play in this adventure, you should **stop reading now**. Advanced knowledge of the scenario will only spoil your enjoyment of the game.

The WM should read the entire adventure before play begins. Knowing the basic flow and details in advance will greatly speed up play and make the game run smoother.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

You also need a copy of the *Savage Worlds* rule book and the *Necropolis: 2350* Savage Setting. The *Necropolis* Figure Flats are recommended, though any suitable sci-fi or dark future miniatures will suffice.

CHARACTERS

This adventure is designed for a Lance of four Heroic Knights from any of the core Sacri Ordines, though Veteran characters should be able to cope if they use their brains. Use the archetypes from the *Necropolis* setting book if you need pre-generated characters. Each archetype has been designed as a starting character. Those used should be advanced as the player wishes to bring them up to 60 XPs.

Should a character die, the player has only one option—to play one or more of the Brothers of Perpetual Prayer (page 65). The main NPC, Knight Commander Damasc, should remain an NPC. At the end of the adventure, the player creates a new character as normal,

his replacement gaining the Experience Points the rest of the party earned during the adventure.

ACT 1: SIDES ARE TAKEN

Even when on duty in the Preceptory, sleep is a valued commodity. It thus comes as something of a surprise when at 0230 hours the Knights are roused from their sleep.

The barrack lights flicker into life, shedding their stark, soulless glow into your tired, blinking eyes. Standing by the door in full armor is the Preceptor Intelligence Officer, Dante Trebano.

"Get dressed," he says quietly. "Meet me outside in ten minutes. And keep the noise to a minimum." With that he turns and leaves.

PIO Trebano doesn't make any comment if the Knights are late, though he casts a disparaging look at the Lance. He gestures for the Knights to climb into the back of a waiting Prophet. Once they are aboard, he climbs into the passenger compartment and closes the door. Trebano refuses to speak further about the early summons, instead ordering the Knights to keep quiet. The APC stops outside the main headquarters building. Trebano leads the Knights into the Preceptor Master's office.

SCENE 1: THE DARKNESS GATHERS

The Preceptor Master rises from behind his desk to greet you. As he does, Trebano places a small device on the desk and activates. A momentary, high-pitched whistle fills the air, but quickly fades. He flicks the gizmo a few times, and then nods to the Preceptor Master.

"Good morning, Knights," he says. "We need you for a covert mission. Before I continue, I must warn you that you may be going up against other Knights. I can't tell

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you any more until you take a holy vow to keep everything you bear secret until you face the Almighty in person. Because of this, you have the right to leave now, with no stain on your record or honor."

The Preceptor Master waits until the Knights accept the terms (or leave). Assuming the former occurs, he continues.

"I have been contacted by an old and trusted friend, Father Benjamin Goldblum. He's a member of the Merovingian Order, a small sect largely unknown outside the upper echelons of the Church. The Inquisition, with Papal approval, has begun arresting the Merovingians. According to reports, dozens have been incarcerated and just as many killed while "resisting arrest."

"Father Benjamin told me he had to reveal a secret before he was captured. Strangely, that secret wasn't for my ears—it's for yours. He didn't ask for you by name, just Banner and Lance designation. I don't know what is going on, but if Father Benjamin says it is important, then I believe him.

"Your mission is to enter the slums of Vatican City disguised as a mercenary team and "kidnap" Father Benjamin from an apartment building in which he's hiding. With any luck we have a bead start on the Inquisition, but there's a chance you'll have to engage with Inquisitors and Teutonic Knights opposed to your plan. Father Benjamin must be rescued at any cost.

"You'll be issued with Union manufactured weapons and armor, since they are preferred by mercenaries. Any gear traceable to the Ordo must be left behind. If you have any distinguishing tattoos or birthmarks, they'll be removed by laser. Naturally there is a risk you may be captured. In this event," he pauses for a few moments, "prisoners must be permanently silenced.

"Look, I know this sounds very bad right now, but I swear on my immortal soul that if there were any other way to conduct this mission I'd take it. Time is against us, though."

The Preceptor Master provides the last address Father Benjamin gave him, stating that it is the only lead available. A Cherub will drop the Lance off in a park close to the apartment block in which Father Benjamin is hiding and

then take off again. When the target is located, the Knights are to summon it for rapid evacuation.

The Lance is issued with 12mm ballistic weapons and as much ammunition as they want. The Knights are free to take pistols, SMGs, or assault rifles, as each member prefers. Medium armor is also issued across the Lance.

Each hero may also take five grenades of his choice, though the Preceptor Master reminds them that they are still servants of the Church and should try to restrict collateral damage to a minimum. Any other gear they want, so long as it is not of Church-only design, can be arranged. If the Knights forget, the Quartermaster (who assumes this is a typical secret mission) reminds them to hand over their ID tags.

Once everyone is kitted up, the Lance is taken to the Cherub.

SCENE 2: SAVING FATHER BENJAMIN

Since there is no way of knowing where the Lance is garrisoned, the GM must determine the time of day. If the Lance is stationed on the same continent, it is early morning and the lighting is Dim (-1). Otherwise, it is dusk (and still Dim lighting).

Father Benjamin is currently hiding in a small apartment, in a rather seedy part of the Vatican City. The Cherub hovers a few feet from the ground over a small park, a block from the building while the Knights jump out. The insertion craft then silently lifts off into the gloomy sky.

The Knights reach the apartment block without any difficulty. Father Benjamin's apartment is on the third floor. The elevator is out of order, forcing the Lance to use the stairs.

If they knock on the door, a female voice answers, asking who is outside. Mention of the Preceptor Master's name (the Knights know their commander's name, even if they rarely use it) results in the door opening and the Knights being ushered inside by an elderly woman.

Kicking the door down is another valid means of entry (this is supposed to be an authentic kidnapping). Bursting in, the Knights find an elderly woman cooking stew. There's no sign of Father Benjamin, but the kitchen table is set for two diners. Again, mentioning the Preceptor Master by name is the right way forward.

Father Benjamin emerges from a wardrobe in the bedroom on hearing his old friend's name.

"Let us get this over with," he says. "Either you were sent to rescue me or the plan has been uncovered and you are about to put a bullet in my brain. Which is it to be?"

Father Benjamin says goodbye to the lady (an old friend of his mother) and grabs a small gym bag containing his few belongings. He tells the Knights the Inquisition is close to finding him (he has a civilian friend who works for them) and that they should hurry in executing their escape plan. The monk won't speak of the mission or what secret he has to tell, claiming all will be revealed at the appointed time.

SCENE 3: COMETH THE INQUISITOR

The real trouble begins when the Knights get outside. The roof of the building slopes and is covered in aerials, both of which prevent the Cherub from getting close enough. The only viable option is to leave the building at street level.

Regardless of whether they leave from the front or back door, the Lance runs into an Inquisitor-Captain backed by a Lance of Teutonic Knights. No warning shout or option to surrender is given—the Teutonics simply open fire. The first volley misses the Knights by a whisker, ripping into the wall. Deal initiative cards!

The Inquisitorial Lance is well-trained and equipped. They don't charge the Knights or present easy targets, but instead make use of Cover, suppressive fire, grenades, and litanies to the best of their ability. Despite not being stupid, they do fight to the last man—death in the service of the Church is not feared by these fanatics.

The only place the Cherub can safely land is the park. If ordered, it will attempt to land in the street. For the latter, the Templar pilot must make a Piloting roll (Piloting d8+1) at the end of each round. With success, it touches down. On a failure, the updrafts and proximity of buildings and parked cars force him to abort and try again next round.

Cherubs are not heavily armored and are susceptible to small arms fire. Each time the Cherub takes a wound, the pilot makes a Guts roll (Guts d8). On a failure, he bugs out at the end of the round. He won't try to land again until the area is secure, though he will provide aerial fire support. He won't abandon

the Knights, though—as a devout Templar he won't leave the field unless he is the last man alive.

Inquisitor: See page 67.

Teutonic Chaplain: See page 67.

Teutonic Knight Infantry (2): See page 67.

Teutonic Knight Infantry Support: See page 67.

ACT 2: AWAKENINGS

The Cherub blasts off at top speed once the last Knight is aboard. Father Benjamin speaks to the pilot and gives him coordinates.

"I'm sorry," the monk says, "but we can't go to the Preceptory just yet. I hope your commander told you it was imperative that you be the ones to rescue me. Before we can return I have to show you why, and we have to pick up someone rather special."

Knights who radio the Preceptory for orders are told, by the Preceptor Master in person, to obey Father Benjamin's wishes and not to ask too many questions.

Several hours later, the Cherub flies into the northern edge of the Leviathan Mountains. Navigating down small valleys for added concealment, it finally begins to slow as it draws near a monastery built partially into the side of a cliff. With a gentle bump the craft lands in a small courtyard. Father Benjamin asks the pilot to keep the engine running and ready for immediate lift off on his return. He then climbs out and asks the monks to follow him into the monastery.

"We are about to visit a very special...prisoner. The prisoner has asked for you specifically. We don't know why, but it's important we follow protocol in this matter. Rest assured, you've done nothing wrong."

"When we get to the prisoner, you are not to approach closer than two yards. Avoid eye contact whenever possible. Should the prisoner try to escape, you have one order—to use exceptional lethal force to prevent this. Am I understood?"

The monk then walks toward the door and orders the Knights to follow. Descending several flights of stairs, Father Benjamin leads the squad down to the basement of the monastery,

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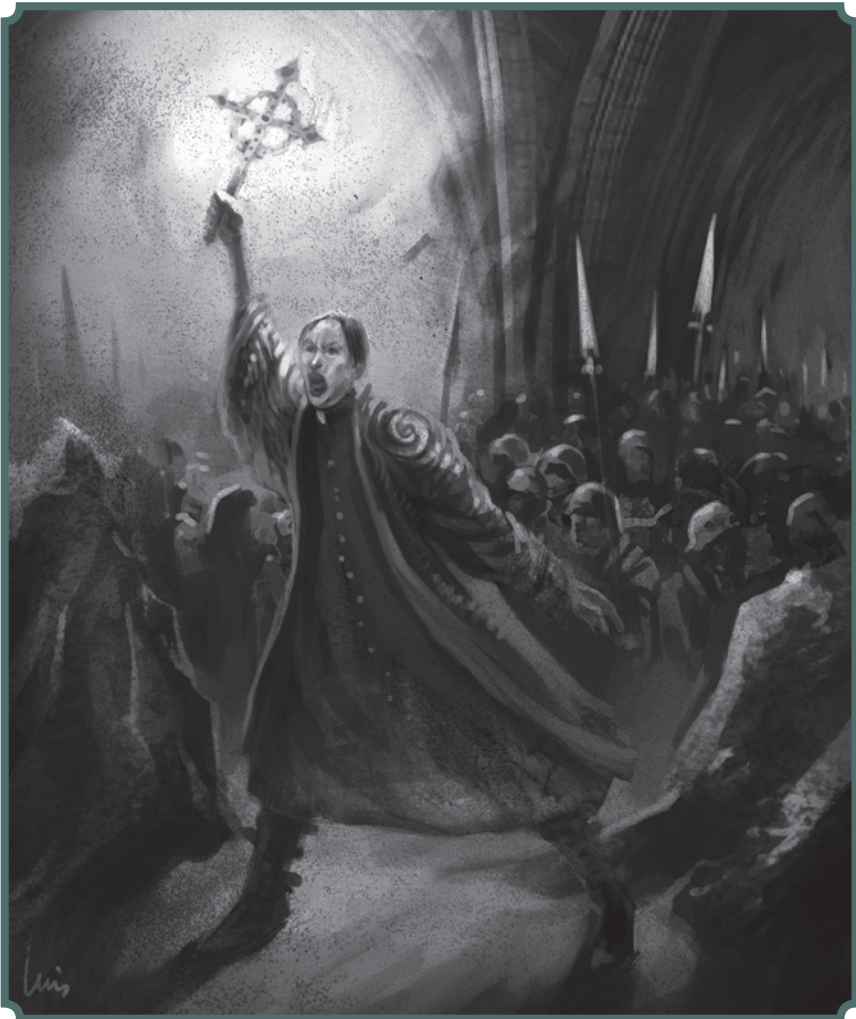
into what appears to be a disused storeroom. Approaching a blank wall, he places his hand against a stone.

With a sudden hiss, a hidden doorway in the wall swings open to reveal a set of narrow spiral stairs. As the Knights pass through, following the monk, they cannot help but notice the door is solid metal, several inches thick, and has multiple locking bars. Halfway down the spiral, the Knights hear the sounds of the door close and lock behind them.

At the foot of the stairs is a long corridor, lit by low-wattage bulbs. At the far end is a metal door engraved with strange

symbols. The monk stands in front of a small screen and says his name and rank. A pale blue light flickers momentarily across his face. He indicates for you all to do the same.

"This is a facial recognition security system," he says as you begin the process. "When we leave that door," he indicates the door at the end of the corridor, "sensors will scan our faces. If anyone not registered on the security system is present, appropriate automatic measures will be taken. Just be warned, you do not want to be in this corridor should that happen."



Once everyone has been scanned, the group advances toward the door. Father Benjamin dabs each of the Knights on the forehead with oil, while reciting prayers. Only when he is finished does the Merovingian activate the door, again using his palm. With a terrible grating sound, the door slowly opens.

SCENE 1: DEMON BOUND

Beyond the door is a large, vaulted-ceiling, stone chamber. The smell of human filth, decay, and something altogether more unpleasant hangs heavily in the air.

Six monks clad in plain gray robes kneel inside the door, their heads lowered and cowed. A constant droning chant echoes through the chamber. "Do not disturb them," Father Benjamin warns. "They are members of the Brothers of Perpetual Prayer. They perform a sacred task."

The far end is in deep shadow, but something can be sensed moving in the shadows. "Prepare yourselves," whispers the monk. "And keep strong in the faith."

The Merovingian takes a step forward, his presence activating low-wattage bulbs, which cast eerie shadows through the vault. Chained to the back wall is a man. Manacles around his wrists attach to brackets on the ceiling, and his face is concealed by an iron mask. Only a narrow slit for a mouth and two eyeholes break the casing. The chains obviously allow for some movement, for he is knelt on the ground.

All he wears is a stained loincloth. His torso is covered in a patchwork of scars. Yet they are not the scars of war like many of you carry. Each scar is a ghastly symbol of evil, the sort of glyphs you have seen on the armor and vehicles of the Repbaim.

"They are here, as you requested," calls the monk. "Knights," the Master says turning to face you, "this is Knight Commander Petrov Damasc."

Petrov Damasc's name is well-known to the Knights. He is regarded as one of the greatest war heroes of their Ordo. According to the public reports, he went missing over 25 years ago. No questions about how he came to be here will be answered at this time.

Have the Knights make a Common Knowledge roll at -2 to see what they know of the Brothers of Perpetual Prayer. With success, the Knight knows they are a small order whose

A LACK OF CHANTING

The four Brothers of Perpetual Prayer are present as an emergency measure. Although they continually pray and chant, they are not binding the demon inside Damasc. Rather, they are simply following the vow they took when they joined the order.

As such, it doesn't matter, in terms of the adventure, if they cease chanting, though they resist *any* attempts to silence them.

BEHIND THE MASK

Damasc's mask has no lock, having been welded shut around his face. While many groups likely won't try to take it off, there is always a chance someone will get very curious and take a cutting torch to it (the only way to remove it).

Underneath, Damasc looks surprisingly normal. His face is aged with deep stress lines, but otherwise he appears completely normal. At least until he opens his mouth wide and reveals all his teeth have been sharpened to points (he did this himself) and his tongue has been cleft in two, to resemble that of a snake (again, self-inflicted before his rescue).

purpose is to pray constantly for mankind. Further information will be revealed later by Father Benjamin.

Should the Knights take a peek under the cowls (the Curious Hindrance virtually demands this), they must make a Guts roll to avoid Fear. All of the monks have had their eyes removed and ears surgically blocked.

Damasc raises his head and looks at each of you briefly. Though you cannot see his eyes, you feel them move over you. Despite the distance between you, you feel physically sick, as if something unhallowed had cast its baleful glance into your soul.

"Thank you, Father Benjamin." Damasc's grating voice, deep and strong, sends shivers up your spine. "Welcome to my home, Knights." He extends a hand in greeting, a hand lacking any fingers. "No handsbake?" he laughs. "Ah well, human contact is such a strange thing to me now.

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At least let me do the proper thing and stand in your presence," he adds with a smile.

Yanking on the chains, he drags himself upright. You see now that Damasc was not kneeling before—his legs are missing below the knee. With a chuckle he lowers himself back to the floor: "Sorry," he smiles, "but I get so little humor in my life these days.

"I think it is important that you know I am not insane," he continues. "Whatever tales you may have heard, I am perhaps the sanest man alive. I have seen things beyond imagination. I have seen the true nature of the universe. I have seen beyond the veil you call reality.

"Something dark is held bound in the central Leviathan Mountains. The seal of faith is weakening, and soon it will be freed. The great darkness knows of this and seeks to speed up the process. Where the five valleys meet as one, you will find it. The Lance of the Vessel must destroy the darkness, but the Vessel must be present. Only when it is, so can the Beast be slain."

Should a hero invoke *detect arcana* on the prisoner at any point, have him roll his Faith as normal. With success, he sees a terrible, grotesque, demonic form writhing beneath Damasc's skin. He must make a Guts roll at -2 to avoid Terror. Any reaction causes Damasc to laugh loudly, though he says nothing.

Whether this incident is raised with the monk or not, Father Benjamin imparts some more information once the troupe is back outside the vault.

As far as the Merovingians who have studied the man can tell, Damasc is possessed by some powerful Rephaim spirit. Its exact nature remains a mystery, but it is speculated Damasc is somehow using the spirit to gain valuable information. All that seems to be holding the entity from consuming his soul, mind, and body is Damasc's remaining faith and his willpower. Should it break free it could cause havoc, hence the security and spiritual wards surrounding the prisoner. It is also a valuable asset, albeit a highly unorthodox one.

Aside from revealing the monks' act as a spiritual ward against the entity (they work together to cast a ritual version of *consecrate* around the area near the door), no other information is imparted unless a Knight has seen beneath the cowl and raises the matter of their mutilation.

Father Benjamin sighs heavily when this topic is raised. With heavy heart he says their sacrifice was necessary. In order to ensure they fell for no seductive words or illusions, they were "modified" to reduce all outside stimuli. Hidden security cameras, manned around the clock, watch over them, and the monks operate in shifts, allowing them to eat and sleep before continuing their eternal vigil. Each monk knew what would happen if he accepted the role, and each volunteered, regardless. Although Damasc has managed to keep the entity bound within his flesh for over two decades, there is no guarantee how long this status quo will last, hence the need to remain constantly vigilant.

Once back in the relative calm of the upper monastery, Father Benjamin turns to the Knights.

"Before you ask, Damasc is obviously the 'Vessel.' Unfortunately for you, he served in the same Banner and Lance as you. Seems whatever power's behind this, you're the Lance. Come, we must return to your Preceptory now and inform your commander of what has transpired here. Reinforcements should be here soon to collect Damasc and some others. It's all been arranged by your pilot."

INFORMATION

During the trip, Father Benjamin tells the Knights about his Order and the Brothers of Perpetual Prayer. This is reproduced in the two Updates, which should be given to the players at this time. He also tells the tale of Knight Commander Damasc.

"I feel it best you know something of Damasc's background," the monk says. "Knight Commander Damasc was once an honorable Knight. He had proven himself in battle countless times and performed many acts of bravery. He was loved by his men. Knights even openly requested transfers to serve in his Banner.

"Twenty five years ago, Damasc was approached and informed of the demon. We needed a new host and he seemed perfect. He volunteered without hesitation, laying down his life, perhaps his sanity, for the cause. The story was put out that Damasc had fallen in battle in the Leviathan Mountains and his body could not be recovered.

"Ten years ago Damasc's willpower faltered slightly while he was making contact with the entity. Much to my shame security was not as tight back then. We had grown

complacent, a sin for which God shall judge me in His own time. Damasc escaped his bonds, killing three of my brothers in the process.

"By the time we recaptured him he was naked and covered in those scars. As far as the medics could tell, they were self-inflicted. He was also missing his fingers and lower legs. They weren't cut off in combat. The flesh was missing but the bones were intact."

He pauses for a long moment. "After analysis the surgeons concluded the flesh from his fingers and legs had been gnawed off. Bite marks were present on the neighboring tissue. The imprints matched those of Damasc's teeth. Whatever lives inside him, it caused a battle-hardened veteran to eat his own flesh."

"Since then, he's been kept imprisoned under maximum security. Every now and then we check on him in person. Most times he says nothing, but occasionally, like today, he decides to reveal something. Were it not for his remarkable insight, and those of previous hosts, we'd likely have exorcised the demon a long time ago."

"God and Damasc alone know what torment the Knight endures daily, but I feel that the Almighty has reserved a place in Heaven for Damasc, as he did all those he came before."

SCENE 2: BACK AT THE PRECEPTORY

Just before landing, Father Benjamin passes the Senior Knight a small wooden cross.

"Take this, and use it wisely," he whispers. "It's a talisman designed to weaken Rephaim. It doesn't last long, but it might just save your life."

The talisman contains the *weaken Rephaim* power and has 10 Power Points. It uses the rules for the Talisman Creator Edge from the *Necropolis 2351-55 Update*.

As soon as the Cherub lands at the Preceptory, Father Benjamin is taken to brief the Preceptor Master. The Knights are led away by Trebano. After giving the Lance time to wash and eat, Trebano escorts them back to the Preceptor Master's office.

Inside are two men. One you recognize immediately as the Preceptor Master. Standing by the stained glass window is a tall, muscular man with close-cropped

gray hair and a long scar down his right cheek. He draws on a cigarette, silently watching you file into the room.

"Welcome back," the Master says, a warm smile on his face. He gestures toward the smoking man. "This is Padre Fistulus Rosemont, the most senior Chaplain in the Ordo and the Grand Master's personal spiritual advisor. He knows what you've been doing recently. It seems Father Benjamin has friends in very high places."

"Father Benjamin has briefed us on the situation. It has come as something of a shock, but these are strange times in which we live. We have no choice but to do as Knight Commander Damasc says. We have to find and eliminate the demon before it falls into enemy hands or escapes and goes on a rampage."

Hand the players Handout #1 at this time.

After the briefing, Padre Fistulus volunteers some extra information if the Knights don't raise the questions.

"In case you are wondering why we had to take such extreme measures, you should know that all is not well in the Church. We strongly suspect enemy forces have gotten close to the Pope and are subverting his will. We have lost much access to His Holiness and can no longer guide his actions."

"The destruction of the Merovingians will lose mankind a great deal of useful knowledge. The demon would also likely be loosed upon the world. We may be acting against the Church in this matter, but we are fighting for a just cause. God will understand the need for our actions, even if we can't."

ACT 3: ANCIENT SECRETS

Damasc is fitted with rudimentary cybernetic legs during the time the Knights are at the stores, gathering equipment. Most man-portable gear should be made available. Only Tabernacle power armor is expressly denied, as it exists only in very limited numbers and is currently little use for operating so deep behind enemy lines.

The Senior Knight is given a small detonator. The bomb it triggers, a small shaped charge of monofilament strands, is around Damasc's neck. It can be activated as an action by the Senior Knight. The bomb kills the former

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Knight Commander instantly but causes no damage to those around him (it just severs his head).

Damasc is escorted to the landing pad by eight Assault Knights in full battle gear, armed with incinerator units. He remains silent throughout the trip, focusing his will on keeping the demon bound. Characters who choose to sit near him must make a Guts roll (no one has to—there's plenty of room in the Angel). With failure, they suffer a -1 penalty to all trait rolls until an hour after they hit the ground and begin their investigation. During this time, they have the feeling Damasc is watching them rather too closely and possibly licking his lips behind his mask.

The four Brothers are led to the Angel by Padre Fistulus, who blesses each one and wishes them luck. They chant quietly during the journey, though one takes the time to answer any questions about their order the characters may have. Only if asked do they give their names—Brothers Frederick, Augustine, Lucius, and Simon.

SCENE 1: THE DOOR

When the dropship is a few minutes from the landing site, the pilot radios through to the Senior Knight's headset and tells him to get his men ready. The pilot, Paula Jeffries, tells the commander she'll be setting down for as little time as possible and then bugging out to the other side of the mountains, to await their call for extraction. At best, it'll be an hour after the call is given before the dropship will be at the landing zone.

The dropship settles down on the rim of a valley, one of five, which join nearby. Once the ship is airborne, Damasc points toward the valley floor. A narrow pathway winds down the slope to the valley bottom, two hundred feet below. *"Down there," he mutters. "We need to get down there."*

Have each character make an Agility roll. Unless a critical failure is rolled, no harm befalls the hero. Failure indicates a Knight starts to slip, but someone grabs him. Those who roll snakeeyes suffer a level of Fatigue from bumps and bruises, as they lose their footing and slide and bounce partway down the slope.

The valley floor is strewn with small mounds of rubble, large boulders, the result of recent landslides, small trees, and dense patches of thorn bushes, making it difficult going. After an hour of hard marching, Damasc

suddenly stops. *"Here," Damasc says quietly. "I can feel it. Search the area. Quickly! Time is against us!"*

Have the Knights make a Notice roll. Whoever rolls the highest (even if that would normally indicate a failure) locates a door in the side of the valley wall.

The finder must now make a Spirit roll. With failure, he catches a brief glimpse of dark tendrils extending through the door. This is a demonically-induced hallucination. The Knight suffers a -1 penalty to all trait rolls for the next hour. On a critical failure, he sees disembodied faces forming in the door, howling in agony. This causes him to roll on the Fright table. No other hero, even one stood beside the door finder, sees the images.

Judging by the scarring and weathering, the metal door has been here for many years. The only marking of note is a faint circle with a raised solid circle in the centre.

Have the characters make a Common Knowledge roll at -2. With success, they recognize the symbol as that of the First Reformation Church, which lasted from 2149 to 2201. The outer circle represented mankind, while the inner circle symbolized the belief in one supreme deity. In texts, the deity was referred to as the One, but worshippers could apply any name they wished (such as God, Allah, Buddha, or even pagan deities like Odin). Should they all fail, Damasc reveals the information.

There is no sign of a handle or lock. As soon as someone asks, "How do we get in?" the door creaks open of its own accord. A strong waft of stale air, tinged with something describable only as unholy, assails the Knights' nostrils. Damasc chuckles when this occurs and says, *"It looks like we're invited. After you!"* Alternately, the door can be destroyed, though this likely requires explosives due to its Toughness (Toughness 18).

SCENE 2: THE CATHEDRAL

Beyond the door is a rough-bewn corridor. After a dozen yards, the corridor ends at a bridge. Some fifty feet below is the rubble-strewn cavern floor. Across the bridge is a strange yet wondrous sight—a cathedral! Silvery lines cover its surface, shedding pale light across the cavern. The bridge, which spans perhaps 20 yards, ends at a large door, marked with the same symbol you found on the outer portal.

Damasc says very little while in the cathedral. He seems almost absent-minded and callous, flicking through old books, moving skeletons around with no respect, and making generally unfitting comments. He never tries to escape the Knights, nor does he act to arouse their suspicions—he simply doesn't care about the trappings within the structure. For this reason, and because he has an inkling of what occurs later, he avoids combat, taking shelter behind cover and letting the Knights do the dirty work.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Unless otherwise stated, all doors in the cathedral are unlocked and have Toughness 12. The outer walls have Toughness 40 (+20 Heavy Armor) and the inner ones Toughness 20 (Armor +10). Every room is lit by strange, silvery lines, engraved into the walls. Treat this glow as providing Dim lighting (−1), in the event no other source of illumination is present.

Dust covers everything, except the shimmering energy field of the great seal. Moving through the dust leaves footprints. Concealing the footprints is extremely difficult (Tracking roll at −4) and time-consuming (30 minutes). One roll and 30 minutes of time is required for each room or corridor.

In some places, parts of the ceiling or walls have collapsed, due to earth tremors. Moving through an area of debris counts as difficult ground.

SILVERY LINES

The silvery lines are conduits for spiritual energy. Part machine, part arcane, they keep the ward preventing the demon from materializing fuelled, drawing energy from capacitors buried deep underground (and unreachable in the adventure).

The lines are extremely fragile (Toughness 4) and breaking one causes it to fade as the energy flow is disrupted. Breakages cannot be repaired.

Characters with the Arcane Background (Miracles) Edge gain the effects of the Wizard Edge while in the cathedral, the capacitors providing extra spiritual energy whether it is wanted or not. Characters with the Holy Man Edge gain a further benefit—they reduce the cost of a litany by one with success plus one per raise. As usual, they must have the full Power Points to invoke the litany, normally (since they

lose the full amount on a failed Faith roll). This bonus is lost when the demon escapes, the capacitors having finally run dry.

Although this does drain the capacitors slightly faster, the WM need not be concerned with recording the details—it's all accounted for later.

KEY AREAS

Only a few important locations are described. The rest of the cathedral contains appropriate paraphernalia to meet the room titles you decide. For instance, a chapel contains an altar and pews, bedrooms hold beds, books still rest on the library shelves, and so on.

CRYPT

Dust covers a collection of stone biers, upon which lie skeletons. A few have bullet holes in their heads. Others have deep scars on their bones or are missing limbs, possibly indicating some acts of mutilation occurred in life.

The skeletons are those of the cathedral's former occupants. Driven mad by the demon, many took their own lives cleanly, but some chose to mutilate their bodies (like Damasc did when he was possessed). None of the skeletons have been topped and tailed, which means they can be animated using the *zombie* power.

GREAT MACHINE

Within this chamber lies a strange sight. Four skeletons clad in decaying robes sit cross-legged on the floor, around a central column of stone glittering with silvery lines. The column rises up, ending in a large crystal sphere, which glitters with pale, silvery light. Thick cables run from the crystal into the walls, from where thin silvery lines identical to those you have seen throughout the cathedral radiate.

Atop each skeleton's head is a metal cap from which wires project. The wires connect to the base of the column. Arranged on a control panel of some sort are old-fashioned dials. The needles flicker weakly, each dial reading near zero.

This is the heart of the cathedral, spiritually at least. It served as the user interface for the great machine. The skeletons, all former monks with miraculous powers, transferred

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their spiritual essence through the wires to the column, which then funneled it into subterranean capacitors.

When the device was fully functional, amplifiers allowed each monk to keep the capacitors charged with ease. Earthquakes and the ravages of time have damaged the amplifiers beyond repair (they too are concealed deep underground) and the energy reserves of the great machine are almost expended.

The skeletons show no signs of injury. They willingly gave their lives to ensure the machine was kept fully charged, denying themselves food or rest, and eventually perishing from starvation.

A successful Repair roll reveals the wiring, caps, and column all form some sort of machine, but it is unlike anything the Knights have ever witnessed before. No amount of raises can fathom the exact nature of its inner workings.

Refer to page 61 (**The Seal Weakens**) if a character with the Arcane Background (Miracles) Edge places one of the metal caps on his head. Anyone donning a cap must remain adjacent to the pillar due to the short reach of the wires.

GREAT PORTAL & THE SEAL

Carved into the floor of this chamber is a five-pointed star. Archaic runes and sigils surround the pentagram.

This is not the great seal—it's simply the access portal. To activate it, a living creature must stand at each of the star's points. No words need be spoken—the very act of standing there activates hidden sensors, which power the mechanism. Note that the Rephaim cannot activate the mechanism. Should they slay the Knights, they resort to using weapons to smash through the portal.

When five people stand at the tips, the central portion of the pentagram slides back. Beneath is a set of spiral stairs leading down. A pale silvery glow radiates from the hole.

The stairs descend for 10" (20 yards), before opening up into a cavern. In the center of the cavern is a swirling vortex of energy. Within the vortex can be glimpsed a towering, dark shadow, though no details are discernible. See **Act 3: Acts of Faith** below for more information.

Once the portal is activated, it remains open until one of two events occurs. If the five creatures remain standing on the pentagram's tips, it seals after a minute. Should anyone

break the pattern, the stairs remain visible until five people again stand on the tips, at which point the door seals again.

STUDY

The dust of centuries covers everything in a thick layer. In a high-backed wooden chair sits a skeleton, its robe now a patchwork of thin threads. Clutched in its hands is a leather-bound book. In front of the skeleton, on a wooden table, rests an old-fashioned pistol.

The skeleton shows no sign of injury. The unfortunate victim simply lost the will to live after becoming possessed by the demon after finishing the book and sat here until he died of natural causes. The book appears to be a diary. Its contents are summarized in Handout #2, which should be given to the players after someone has read the book for half an hour.

Treat the pistol as a 6mm pistol. It is fully loaded. Firing the pistol without cleaning it causes the weapon to explode if the Shooting die is a 1, regardless of any Wild Die. The firer takes 2d6 damage. Removing the dust takes 5 minutes but no die roll is required (despite not using ballistic weapons, Knights learn how to operate and maintain them during basic training).

PREPLANNED EVENTS

There are several preplanned events that take place during this phase of the mission. These should be used when required by the WM to keep the action going, but they must all be used.

EARTHQUAKE!

This event should be used shortly after the Knights enter the cathedral. Although it risks injuring them, it gives plentiful time to perform Healing before the true antagonists are encountered and provides a clue that time is not on their side.

Without warning, the ground begins trembling. An earthquake has struck the cathedral (but not the surrounding terrain). This is a result of the demon attempting to force its way through the seal. It has tried many times in the last 200 years, and each time it has succeeded in damaging part of the internal structure, so speeding up the rate of the decay of the ward which binds it.

Deal each character (including individual NPCs) a single card. A red card or Joker indicates the hero avoided being struck by falling debris. A club means the unfortunate soul is struck by falling masonry, taking 2d6 damage. A spade results in 3d6 damage. Armor protects as normal.

After the quake ends, the characters notice some of the silver lines have stopped glowing. The obvious cause seems to be a large crack running down the wall nearest them, which has severed a line.

Should the party be having too easy a time later, perhaps having walked through the Rephaim, the WM should use another during the encounter with the demon.

REPORT FROM THE FRONT

The backpack radio suddenly crackles into life.

"Stonewall calling Bloodbound, Stonewall calling Bloodbound. Enemy forces have engaged us as expected. Large numbers of skeletons and zombies with war demon support. Primary defensive perimeter is breeched. We're falling back to secondary defensive lines and activating the minefield and sentry guns to delay them and cover our withdrawal. Don't take too long doing whatever you have to do!"

Stonewall, the mission codename for Preceptor Master Elizabeth Cruz, the senior commander in the assault force, is available to talk if the Knights want to update her as to their progress. She's not in any mood for idle gossip, though!

REPHAIM INCURSION

The Dark Conclave, having learned of the demon's whereabouts through the Dark (the demonic essence inside Damasc has a link to its master only when Damasc uses it to reveal information), ordered a two-pronged assault on the region.

The main force, the one Stonewall's troops are fighting, was a diversionary force sent out in case the Sacri Ordines tried anything en masse. Were the Ordines lax in their duties, they were to push on toward the location of the demon and provide additional support. The actual strike force sent to liberate the demon is much smaller and arrives at the door not long after the Knights.

If the Lance posted a sentry, then he sees the Rephaim arrive (they begin 50" away from the door, having rounded a spur in the valley wall). Otherwise, the first the Knights learn of the Rephaim's presence is when they assault the cathedral.

The Rephaim have no idea about the Knights, though they are convinced some are likely to be present. In their arrogance, they make straight for the largest supernatural power source, which in this case is the great seal surrounding the demon. Unfortunately, if the portal is closed they are stymied, temporarily.

Should they run across the Knights, they take up positions and engage. They're not stupid (skeletons may be fairly mindless, but their commander is a competent leader) and will make use of Cover, aim if they need to, throw grenades to clear rooms, and so forth.

If the party is exceptionally strong (90+ Experience Points) or contains lots of members (6+), or the WM has a cruel streak, he should have the Rephaim encounter the Knights the round after the great seal is discovered. This forces the party to try and staunch the seal's collapse and engage the Rephaim, simultaneously, which should present the Knights with tactical and resource problems. Otherwise, the Rephaim should make their presence felt before the seal is located.

The Rephaim force comprises:

Greater mummy (High Priest Beleth): See page 68.

Young vampire (Centurion Hauras): See page 68.

Sentry skull (1): See page 69.

Advanced skeletons (10): See page 68.

ACT 4: ACTS OF FAITH

Events in this section are triggered the *instant* the great seal is first spotted, even if that occurs during a firefight. Other events of the Lance's making may occur during these scenes—this section is not linear until the ward reaches a critical point.

SCENE 1: THE SEAL WEAKENS

The great warding seal is failing rapidly. When it is discovered, it has 12 Power Points remaining. At the start of each round thereafter, one Power Point is drained. When the total

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number of Power Points reaches 4, events in **The Binding**, below, come into play. When the Power Points reach zero, move on to **Release and Destruction**.

Although the heroes cannot permanently reestablish the warding, they can delay its collapse. Any character with the Arcane Background (Miracles) Edge, who connects to the Machine, can expend one Power Point per round to help fuel the warding spell. Multiple characters can each donate one Power Point per round. While connected to the Machine and transferring Power Points, the hero can take no actions (including movement or speech).

Discovering that spiritual energy can be transferred into the ward can occur in one of two ways. First, the party can use the information left by the former inhabitants. Second, a Knowledge (Religion) roll or Common Knowledge roll from any character with Arcane Background (Miracles) reveals the warding has been set up so any member of the Faithful can sacrifice energy into the litany. Discovering the latter requires four rounds studying the ward.

SCENE 2: THE BINDING

Sooner or later the warding will fail, fully releasing the bound entity. When the Power Points total is reduced to 4, the ward reaches a point of critical failure. Adding extra Power Points now has no effect. Characters attached to the Machine realize this immediately.

As the seal fails, tendrils of dark, crackling energy begin to break through. A howling, deafening wind rips through the area, whipping up loose material. Damasc, who knows what is happening through his link with the demon, is quick to act.

"The Beast must be complete but weakened if you are to prevail," he shouts. "Join with the darkness! Bind it into your souls and keep it imprisoned with your faith or all is lost!"

Now comes the final test of faith. Damasc is telling the truth, but he is also possessed by part of the entity. The Knights simply have no way of knowing whether this is some fiendish trap or the truth. It is, of course, the truth. Although imprisoning parts of the demon won't destroy it, the process will weaken its physical form when it inevitably materializes (see **Weakening the Demon** below).

In order to accept possession, a character need simply reach out and touch one of the snaking tendrils. He must then make a Spirit roll at -2 (or Faith roll with no penalty, if he

prefers). Each character has just one chance and a maximum of four rounds in which to decide his course of action. Should they want to start a theological debate with Damasc, or each other, give them 24 seconds of *real time* (each round equates to six seconds). Once the creature fully materializes (when the Power Points reach zero), it is too late to try and absorb part of its essence.

A failure means the Knight either cannot go through with the possession or the demon simply refuses to enter him. Either way, he cannot aid in weakening the fiend, though at least his soul is not imperiled. A critical failure results in instant and automatic possession, as described below.

With success, the character accepts the demon into his body and manages to keep it imprisoned, for the most part, though the containment is not guaranteed to work, should the Knight lose concentration.

If, during the final combat, the Knight rolls a 1 on his Spirit or Spirit-linked skill die, regardless of the Wild Die, the fragment escapes his control and vacates the body. Whatever power the demon lost is returned instantly. On a critical failure of a Spirit or Spirit-linked skill roll, the hero's resolve crumbles and he becomes fully possessed. He automatically goes berserk (as per the Edge) and turns on his comrades. Only his death or the destruction of the demon can end this rage (though he can be temporarily disabled by rendering him unconscious).

During the possession, his form warps and mutates as the demon tries to consume his living form. Fortunately for him the miniscule amount of energy within the Knight cannot complete the process, though it does give him the Fear ability.

Once the demon is slain, all possessed characters are free of its essence.

WEAKENING THE DEMON

For each Knight who successfully imprisons part of the demon's essence within his body, the demon loses access to one of its special abilities. The character doesn't gain the ability—he simply denies it to the demon. Should a hero holding one of these abilities in check die, it returns to the demon at the start of the next round.

Since the adventure is designed for four characters, there are four such abilities. Don't take away more abilities if you have more than four characters—the extras just allow for multiple chances of success.

Not every group will negate every power, and some may fail to cancel any at all. Such Lances will just have to think more tactically and hit harder if they want to survive the encounter.

The abilities the demon loses, and the order are they removed, are as below. Whoever makes the first roll negates the first ability, the second successful roll cancels the second power, and so on.

1. Improved Arcane Resistance
2. Hardy
3. Armor (Toughness drops to 18)
4. Malleable

SCENE 3: RELEASE & DESTRUCTION

When the Power Points in the warding reach zero, the demon completes its materialization. Deal initiative cards now. The demon completes its transformation at the end of the round. Until then, it can only be harmed by arcane powers, it effectively being ethereal. It has full access to its special abilities (less those taken by the Knights), though it cannot use them offensively.

With a terrifying roar of victory, the entity breaks free of the collapsing energy vortex. A vaguely humanoid creature, its



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flesh pulsating and writhing, steps forth. Long, fleshy tentacles, three times the length of a man and ending in a grotesque maw, slash wildly through the air. Across the beast's body writhe countless smaller tentacles, each tipped with a small mouth full of sharp teeth.

This is the final encounter of the adventure. Now fully formed, the only way to remove the demon from Salus is to destroy its physical body. Unfortunately, this is not easy.

Aside from its colossal form and special abilities, a core part of its essence lies within Damasc. As noted in its stats, the demon cannot be Incapacitated while Damasc lives. If the heroes don't work this out, Damasc does (although it takes him 5 combat rounds from the first time the Beast ignores an Incapacitated result). Damasc won't kill himself (that's a mortal sin), but he urges the Knights to, "do the right thing for the greater good." Should Damasc have died earlier, this isn't a moral problem the Knights have to face.

Activating the bomb instantly kills him, allowing the Knights to finish off the demon. Any character adjacent to Damasc can perform a Finishing Move—Damasc doesn't resist. Once the demon actually becomes Incapacitated, it ceases to exist, simply disappearing with a bang as air rushes in to fill the void it leaves.

AFTERMATH

Following the destruction of the demon, the Knights are largely free to do as they wish. Their comrades are still fighting the Rephaim army, though, and any serious delay results in further casualties. Although no one except the party knows when the mission is completed, the characters should be reminded (with the GM serving as the conscience) that every minute they refrain from summoning support places more lives in jeopardy.

The dropship arrives an hour after it is signaled and extracts the survivors. The Preceptor Master, Padre Fistulus, and PIO Trebano thoroughly debrief the Knights on their return. The mission is never out on record, and the location of the cathedral remains a closely guarded secret.

In order to cover up their disappearance from the Preceptory, they are told to repeat to their comrades-in-arms the official story being told the press—they were sent to recover Damasc's mortal remains from inside Dead Zone Beta, which were located by a scout team on routine patrol, before the Rephaim could

corrupt them. The defensive action by the Ordo's other forces is widely broadcast by the media as a surgical strike into the Dead Zone, planned long before Damasc's remains were uncovered.

Knight Commander Damasc (whether his body is brought back or not) is given a funeral with full military honors and buried close to the altar within the Preceptory cathedral. Channel 1, the Church news channel, runs a lengthy documentary on Damasc's heroic life. Part of the documentary involves an interview with the Knights who recovered the war hero's remains.

Don't feel you have to mention the interview just in passing. Players who enjoy this sort of thing can roleplay the actual interview. The interviewer wants to know the usual sort of things—how do they feel after recovering the remains of a great hero, what Rephaim were present, how did the Knights overcome enemy resistance, and so on.

PIO Trebano is present throughout the interview, though he only intervenes if the Knights get into difficult ground or start revealing more than they should. His stock answer is, "Sorry, answering that question may jeopardize ongoing missions. Next question, please."

Agreeing to partake in the interview allows a character to take the Media Star Edge, though it must be with his next advancement.

UPDATE: MEROVINGIAN ORDER

Various monastic orders are under the umbrella of the Third Reformation Church, one of which is the Merovingian Order.

According to the Census of the Faith of 2346, the Merovingian Order comprised a mere 24 monks. As far as the general public is concerned, the monks were just another small order. A handful of those close to the Pope know the Merovingians research occult matters for the purposes of combating them, but none outside the order know the true reason for the Merovingians' existence.

A SACRED DUTY

During the Crusades of the Middle Ages, a powerful demon manifested on Earth. Little is recorded of its name or appearance, only that it existed. A small group of knights slew the demon's physical form, but not before one of them was possessed by a small part of the

demon's essence. While the demon's unholy body was shattered, its true self sent back to its own realm, the essence remained in the man.

Rather than exorcise the spirit, it was decided to keep the man imprisoned. The reasons why shall perhaps never be known, but perhaps the religious powers at the time sought to better understand their enemy. An order of monks, the Merovingians, was founded for the sole purpose of studying the demon. All the initial members were exorcists or specialists in the occult, as are many members today.

The monks interrogated the man-demon, they studied ancient texts the Catholic Church denied existed, and they walked dark paths, guided only by the light of their faith. In short, they became occultists operating within the sanctity of the Church.

Two things soon became clear. First, the human host could access the consciousness of the demonic essence he had bound within his flesh. This wasn't true communication, rather vague images and feelings. Still, it provided valuable information and helped thwart several demonic acts over the years. It was a dangerous act, for the only things keeping the demon bound within the host were his willpower and faith. Contacting the demonic essence in this manner was not without risks—any lapse in concentration risked giving the demon full control of the host body.

Second, the host did not need to eat or drink, nor did he suffer the ravages of illness, but he was not immortal. In order to keep the demon bound, the monks performed dark rituals to transfer the essence to a new host, a host whose willpower and faith were unshakeable, a host who was fully informed of the sacrifice he would make. For generation after generation, the monks watched over the demon, gathering new hosts and acquiring forbidden knowledge, piece by piece.

ETERNAL ORDER

By the late 19th century their true purpose had all but been forgotten by Rome. On the surface they appeared to be a chapter of exorcists and eccentric monks, dabbling in matters priests called folly or superstition. The monks chose to keep things that way and eventually destroyed all references to their true purpose outside the walls of their monasteries.

Religions have come and gone since those days, but the Merovingians have remained. Never considered an orthodox monastic order,

they found it easy to shift spiritual views to meet those of the dominant faith and so ensure their continuity.

When the Third Reformation Church moved to Salus, the Merovingians followed, bringing with them their great library and, of course, the demon. While most brothers operated openly, a small few remained dedicated to safeguarding the vile entity and finding new hosts. A secret monastery was constructed to contain the demon host.

UPDATE: BROTHERS OF PERPETUAL PRAYER

The Brothers of Perpetual Prayer had their origins back in Earth's history. Founded by Father Jerome Packard in 2037, Packard followed the pseudo-Dionysian hierarchy of Heaven, which placed the seraphim as the highest order of angels. According to the creed, the sole purpose of the seraphim was to surround the throne of God and repeat the trisagion ("holy, holy, holy") in praise of God.

Father Jerome also believed that constant prayer by mortals was required to ensure salvation in God's grace. Since mankind collectively could not perform this action, he founded a brotherhood of monks whose role was to intone prayers 24 hours a day, on behalf of mankind collectively. For over three centuries, the Brotherhood has kept its vows and the recitation of prayers has been unbroken.

It is said that, even during the exodus to Salus, the monks continued to pray while aboard the starships. Collectively, the Brothers have clocked up over 16 *billion* minutes of prayer time.

The Brothers occupy a single monastery, where they work in grueling shifts. Day and night, monks working 18-hour shifts walk a circular pattern around the chapel of their monastery, continually intoning prayers. Despite having lived on Salus for less than four decades, they have worn a path in the flagstones of the chapel.

At present there are 71 monks at the monastery, broken down into seven groups. Each group is named after one of the ruling princes of seraphim, these being recorded as Jehoel, Kemuel, Metatron, Michael, Nathaniel, Seraphiel, and Uriel. Some texts place Satan, before his fall, as a ruling prince, but the monks do

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not use his name, despite the Third Reformation Church having written the Devil out of its doctrine.

The eldest of each group carries the title Choirmaster Vigilant, and it is his sacred duty to ensure those under his charge never cease praying. Leading the Brotherhood is Father Harabiel Vinall. Although he takes his turn praying, his role is largely administrative, for the Brothers employ many lay members to perform the many chores their duties prevent them from undertaking.

OTHER BRANCHES

Two other groups of Brothers exist outside the monastery, though only one is known to the public.

The first, comprising four members, attends the Pope. Their prayers fill his audience chamber day and night. According to common belief, they pray for the Pope and his cardinals, on whose backs the continued existence of mankind rests. Many myths have arisen about the small band of monks. The most popular story states the Pope will die if they stop praying. When he learned of this tale, Pope John supposedly remarked, "I may not die, but rest assured part of my soul will suffer for the loss."

The second group of monks comprises those 12 members who secretly serve the Merovingians. Their sole function is to maintain the spiritual wards surrounding Damasc and prevent whatever infects his body, soul, and mind from escaping. They have undergone ritual mutilation for their own protection.

Only a handful of souls, a number not including the Pope or any member of the Curia, know of the second group's existence. All records within the Brotherhood's archives have been removed or falsified to conceal their disappearance from the monastery.

THE CAST

The War Master may choose to substitute other forms of Rephaim for the ones listed here, to better match the combat potential of the Lance. Unless the party is exceptionally weak or strong, the main villain, a powerful demon, should be left untouched.

ALLIES



FATHER BENJAMIN GOLDBLUM

Father Benjamin (he hates being called Ben) is the *de facto* head of the small Merovingian Order. A scholar of the occult, he knows more about the nature of demons than any other man alive. He has an inkling something truly evil exists (the Dark), but even his lengthy studies have revealed few clues.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d12, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Occult) d12+2, Notice d8, Persuasion d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Curious, Elderly, Pacifist (Major)
Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Charismatic, Holy Warrior, Improved Arcane Resistance, Master (Occult), Talisman Creator

Powers: *Consecrate, detect/conceal arcana, healing, stun*; 20 Power Points

Gear: Book of Common Prayers, 3 medpacs.



KNIGHT COMMANDER DAMASC

Damasc is of little use throughout the adventure, except when he feels he has something to say. Lacking any fingers, he cannot even use a weapon, though he is capable of kicking and "punching" opponents. For the most part, he is a spectator, but one the Knights must devote resources to watching and protecting.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d12+2, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d12, Intimidation d8, Notice d8+2, Persuasion d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Lamé (artificial legs), Ugly (mutilated)

Edges: Alertness (covers all senses), Command, Improved Arcane Resistance, Improved Nerves of Steel, Master (Spirit)

Special Abilities:

* **Focused Will:** Damasc must devote huge amounts of willpower to controlling the demon, possessing him. As such, he may only ever take one action a round. He may take free actions, such as moving his Pace, as normal.

* **No Fingers:** Damasc lacks fingers on both hands. As such, he cannot perform tasks which require these digits.

BROTHERS OF PERPETUAL PRAYERS

The Brothers are completely blind and deaf and rely on being led around by a Knight. As such, unless carefully supervised, they are in danger of blundering into trouble. During combat, they shuffle around until they find suitable cover, and then take shelter from the violence. One of them chants at all times and often all four chant when they are awake.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Guts d12

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Blind, Hard of Hearing (Major), Ugly (disfigured)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Power Points

Powers: *Arcane resistance, consecrate* (20 PP)

Special Abilities:

* **Droning Chant:** Any character adjacent to a Brother suffers a -1 penalty to trait rolls requiring concentration (this includes Shooting), due to the droning chant. However, he receives a +1 bonus to Spirit and Spirit-linked skill rolls, as the prayers bolster his faith and willpower.

* **Combined Faith:** The Brothers have learned special techniques allowing them to combine their spiritual energy. When one invokes *arcane resistance* or *consecrate*, the Brothers are able to pool Power Points for the purposes of Maintaining the spell, but only so long as they chant together. It doesn't matter who pays for the litany's Maintenance, so long as the Brother is chanting the same litany. When two or more monks cooperate in this manner there is no single caster, so the spell cannot be disrupted so long as at least one brother continues to chant.

Chanting in this manner to pool Power Points is considered an action. A brother can aid only one litany in a round, even if two castings of the same litany are in effect. A Shaken brother is temporarily removed from the chanting, and his Power Points are not available to continue Maintaining the spell. Rejoining the chant is an action, once he has recovered from being Shaken.

THE INQUISITORIAL LANCE

INQUISITOR-CAPTAIN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d10, Guts d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Improved Frenzy

Gear: Light armor (+4), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2), flechette pistol with 3 mags (12/24/48, 2d6, AP 2, Semi-auto)

TEUTONIC CHAPLAIN

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d8, Fighting d4, Guts d8, Healing d6, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Rephaim) d10, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 9(4)

Hindrances: Pacifist (minor), Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Church Knowledge, Dodge

Powers: *Deflection, detect/conceal arcana, entangle, stun*; 20 Power Points

Gear: Light armor (+4), stunner with 3 mags (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: 2d6 nonlethal), medikit, Book of Common Prayers, ID tag

TEUTONIC KNIGHT INFANTRY

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11(6)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Homeland Security

Gear: Medium armor (+6), flechette rifle with 3 mags (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8+1, AP 2, Auto, 3RB), 5 baton grenades in GL (Range: 10/20/40, Damage: 2d10 nonlethal), 3 stun grenades on belt (Range: 3/6/12, special, MBT), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4), medpac, ID tag

TEUTONIC KNIGHT INFANTRY SUPPORT

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8

ENEMIES

The enemy forces in this adventure comprise three distinct groups—an Inquisitorial Lance, a Rephaim strike team, and a powerful demon.

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Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 12(6)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Homeland Security, Wall of Flame

Gear: Medium armor (+6), hand flamethrower (Range: Cone, Damage: 2d10, ignores armor), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4), 3 stun grenades on belt (Range: 3/6/12, special, MBT), medpac, ID tag

THE REPHAIM

ADVANCED SKELETONS

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11(4)

Gear: Light armor (+4), flechette rifle with 3 magazines (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8+1, AP 2, Auto, 3RB), 5 monofilament grenades in grenade launcher (Range: 20/40/80, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, MBT)

Special Abilities:

- * **Bony Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Fearless:** Skeletons are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Necromantic Resurrection:** The Rephaim is very hard to keep down. Whenever one is wounded by any means other than a Called Shot to the head, area affect attack, or Heavy Weapon, draw a card from the action deck. A red card indicates the Rephaim is disabled as normal and out of the fight. A black card (or Joker) means the Rephaim ignores the damage from the attack.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots (except as noted above). Half-damage from piercing weapons.

overall objective. Hence, he elected to serve the priesthood, a unified body devoted to serving the Dark's will.

Although he carries a Hades pistol, he has little love of weird science. Beleth chose him as military commander of the operation for this very reason.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Persuasion d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11(2)

Gear: Stygian armor (+2), Hades pistol, rune dagger (Str+d6+2, AP 2)

Special Abilities:

- * **Bite:** Str+d6.
- * **Frenzy:** Vampires may make two attacks per round at -2 penalty.
- * **Greater Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots. Half-damage from piercing weapons. Ignores wound penalties.
- * **Leadership:** Vampires have the Command, Fervor, and Hold the Line Edges.
- * **Sire:** Anyone incapacitated but not killed by a vampire must make a Spirit roll or die and return from the dead as a vampire after 1d4 days.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.

HIGH PRIEST BELETH (MUMMY, GREATER)

Beleth is a senior member of the Dark Priest's inner circle. Normally he is found at his master's side, but the Dark insisted the recovery of the demon be left to the priesthood, not the politicking Dark Conclave or some lesser minion. Indeed, the Dark Conclave do not know the true nature of Beleth's mission, having been left out of the loop. They simply sent a large force of troops to coordinates the Dark Priest provided, unaware they were sacrificial pawns.

Although the Dark Priest chose Beleth to lead the recovery mission, an up-and-coming young vampire from the Dark Priest's personal guard was selected as military commander, Beleth lacking any combat experience. Beleth is a purist and despises the new weird science to which so many of the Rephaim are taking.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12



CENTURION HAURAS (VAMPIRE, YOUNG)

Formerly a Senior Knight serving with a Templar Infantry Lance, Centurion Hauras has served the Dark since 2320 (he took part in the Templars' first engagement against the Rephaim). He has no loyalty to the Dark Conclave, who, he believes, expends too much effort on individual schemes rather than the

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Necromancy d10, Notice d8

Pace: 4 (d4 running die); **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 15(5)

Gear: Stygian armor (+5), rune sword (Str+d8+4, AP 4)

Special Abilities:

- * **Arcane Background (Magic):** A mummy typically knows *barrier* (creates a wall of darkness), *bolt* (swarm of tiny skulls), *deflection* (shield of swirling skulls), *detect/conceal arcana*, *fear* (unearthly cry), *obscure* (area of darkness), and *zombie* (ritual preparation) (40 Power Points).
- * **Crushing Grasp:** Str+d6. On a raise, the mummy automatically grapples its opponent.
- * **Fear (-2):** Opponents must make a Guts roll at -2.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Greater Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots. Half-damage from piercing weapons. Ignores Wound Penalties.
- * **Improved Arcane Resistance:** +4 Armor versus magic, and +4 to rolls made to resist magic effects.
- * **Mummy Rot:** Anyone touched by a mummy, whether he is damaged or not, must make a Vigor roll. Failure means the character has "mummy rot" and suffers an immediate wound. Victims who die as result of "mummy rot" may be brought back as guardian mummies.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.
- * **Weakness (Fire):** Mummies take +4 damage from fire.

SENTRY SKULL

The skull is Beleth's "pet," having served as his eyes and ears for many decades. Beleth uses it as an advanced scout during the mission. When combat occurs, it begins by using its Scream to soften up foes before the advanced skeletons attack.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d10, Stealth d6, Taunt d8

Pace: 0; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

* **Flying:** Pace 6.

* **Headbutt:** Str.

* **Scream:** A skull can emit a terrifying scream. This functions as the *fear* power. The skull uses its Spirit as its arcane skill and has 10 Power Points.

* **Shared Senses:** Beleth can use its senses as if they were his own. Sharing senses requires concentration and gives a multi action penalty to the creator (but not the skull).

* **Size -2:** Screaming skulls are the size of a regular skull.

* **Small:** Attackers are -2 to attack rolls against a skull because of its size.

* **Thermal Vision:** Halves penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets.

* **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage. Immune to poison and disease. Piercing weapons do half damage.



BALAM, THE DEMON

Fate has not been kind to this demon. In days of yore it went by the name Balam. It manifested on Earth during the Crusades and was instrumental in extending the suffering the wars brought to the Holy Land. Its physical form was destroyed, but not before part of its essence had been transferred to a human host.

A thousand years later, Balam again sought to appear in physical form. Whether as part of some complex plan weaved by the Dark, divine will, or just one of those cosmic coincidences, its manifestation was on Salus, the planet on which its bound essence would arrive centuries later.

Balam, a particularly powerful demon, managed to escape the black hole prison during a momentary weakening of the energy field during the arrival of starships in 2176. Fate intervened, and it was discovered and imprisoned before it could fully materialize. It has spent the best part of 200 years trapped in limbo. Now it senses its prison is weakening.

In a bid to ensure its escape, it contacted the Dark, a terrible drain on its resources. Damasc picked up fragmentary pieces of the message as images and realized that Balam was close to escaping. Should it be found by the Rephaim, it would undoubtedly use its powers against mankind.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d8, Spellcasting d10

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Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 22(4)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Vengeful (major)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Improved Frenzy, Improved Level Headed, Sweep, Unholy Warrior.

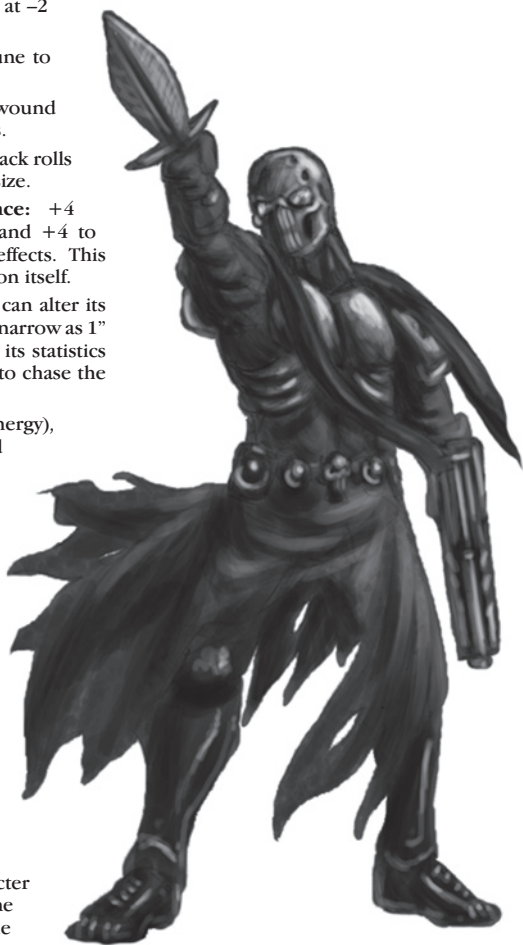
Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +4:** Thick skin.
- * **Demon:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; Called shots do no extra damage; Immune to poison and disease; No wound penalties.
- * **Extra Senses:** Ignores all penalties for darkness or concealment (even an *obscure* spell).
- * **Fear (-2):** Anyone who sees the demon must make a Guts roll at -2 or suffer Terror.
- * **Fearless:** The demon is immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Hardy:** Does not suffer a wound from successive Shaken results.
- * **Huge:** Attackers have +4 to attack rolls against the demon, due to its size.
- * **Improved Arcane Resistance:** +4 Armor versus arcane power, and +4 to rolls made to resist arcane effects. This does not inhibit spells it casts on itself.
- * **Malleable Form:** The demon can alter its form to fit through passages as narrow as 1" (2 yards). This does not affect its statistics (but it does allow the demon to chase the heroes through the ruins).
- * **Powers:** *Bolt* (entropic energy), *lower trait* (can only be used on those containing part of his essence), *detect/conceal arcana* (word of revealing or concealment), *dispel* (word of banishment), *entangle* (slimy tentacles), *fly, stun* (word of power), *teleport* (40 Power Points)
- * **Sickening Aura:** Characters within 3' of the demon must make a Spirit roll or suffer nausea. They suffer a -1 penalty to all trait rolls for the next hour (this is *not* a level of Fatigue, though penalties do stack with other modifiers). Effects are non cumulative. A character who passes the roll is immune to this demon's aura for the remainder of the encounter.
- * **Size +8:** The demon stands close to 30' tall.

* **Tentacle Slam:** Str+d6, Reach 2, AP 4. The demon has two large tentacles.

* **Tentacle Swarm:** The demon's smaller tentacles act like a swarm, automatically striking and inflicting 2d4 damage on all adjacent creatures. Attacking with these tentacles does not count as an action. It cannot use Improved Frenzy or Sweep with these tentacles.

* **Unkillable:** While Damasc lives, the demon *cannot* be destroyed. It can take three wounds, but simply ignores any further injuries. See page 62 for details.



PLAYER HANDOUT #1: TACTICAL BRIEFING

We've conducted reconnaissance flights over the region Damasc indicated before, and there's nothing of note—certainly no structures. However, that area is a maze of valleys and overhangs, so it might be our birds missed something. This means we don't know exactly where the target is located, but his description gives us enough information to launch the mission with a high chance of success.

Records indicate Damasc was operating in this region when he...well, you know. We haven't been able to get any more information from him, though.

Enemy Forces: If Damasc is telling the truth, and he hasn't lied to us yet, the Rephaim are already on their way. Were the mission on our side of the mountains, we'd expect a small strike force. The mountains have prohibited any major incursions—crossing through the passes makes any force an easy target for our bombers.

Unfortunately, the mission is taking place on the western slopes, which means there isn't anything of note between you, and the Rephaim in Dead Zone Beta. The Rephaim might send a small strike team, or they might launch a major assault. We're banking on the latter.

As for Damasc's "great darkness," it could be anything. You won't get any more out of him on the subject, so don't bother asking. If he has further insight, it'll be revealed only when he's ready.

Support: Every time Damasc gives us information, it's only for the ears of a select few. Each time we've sent extra support something conspires against us. In some cases the reinforcements have met terrible deaths and other times the whole mission has been a waste of time. To that end, you're going without military backup. An Angel will drop you off ten miles from the site. After that, it's a foot slog into the mountains.

However, Damasc said nothing about intercepting the Rephaim forces en route, so we've assembled a strike force to intercept and either annihilate or delay the enemy. The intercepting force will be flown in via Angels along the most likely route of approach and briefed they are performing a mission to intercept an assault force heading for the frontline. As far as they are concerned, you're on a covert mission related to the attack and control the air support. Shipping tanks so deep into enemy territory is asking for trouble, so the troops will have to rely on close support artillery.

We'd rather not send them to certain death, so it's vital you work as quickly as possible. Once you've achieved your objective, broadcast the codeword, "Paradise Found." This will call in virtually every aircraft from our Preceptories in Tomaculum to pound the area while the infantry are evacuated. Losses on the ground are likely to be high, but it's a sacrifice we have to take.

We don't like it, but Damasc is going to have to accompany you on this mission. He'll be fitted with cybernetic legs—not powerful enough to allow him to move fast, but strong enough so you won't have to carry him around. He'll also be fitted with a remotely activated bomb. If he goes bad, you are ordered to ensure he dies quickly and with as little suffering as possible—he has been tormented enough, already.

To further ensure your safety, you'll also be taking four Brothers of Perpetual Prayer. We can't risk whatever is inside him escaping without containment being available.

Equipment: Whatever you can carry and we have in stores, you can have. Damasc's visions never involve a stroll in the park, so make sure you're ready for anything and everything. Don't forget to request a backpack radio!

PLAYER HANDOUT #2: ASSORTED NOTES

These notes are summaries of pertinent information left behind by the previous occupants.

IN THE BEGINNING

Let this testimony serve as guidance and a warning to those who come after me.

The year of this writing is 2176. I am a servant of the One, though my name is unimportant. I am the last survivor, the last guardian of a dark and terrible secret.

How the Beast came into existence I do not know. I was brought here in strict secrecy to witness an unholy birth trapped by the power of faith. Others called the creature a demon, and they may be right. All I know is that upon my arrival I saw only a vaporous cloud held in check by the power of colleagues from the First Reformation Church.

It was a battle of faiths. On one side was this vile entity, a palpable evil seeking to enter our world for unknown, yet surely ghastly, purposes. On the other were my brethren, whose constant prayers prevented the abomination from materializing. It was a sight I shall never forget, though one I never wish to recall by choice.

THE GREAT SEAL

Our labors have been fruitful—the Beast is chained. But the cost has been terrible. We have combined faith and science to produce a Machine. Several brothers wanted to give the device a name, but the Machine serves well, for it is both an abomination and a miracle at once, and to name it would be blasphemous.

The Machine is not just metal and wire. Within the cavern we have created a cathedral, whose very shape focuses and amplifies divine will. Stone and metal, electricity and faith, are working together. While our brethren kept the Beast at bay, we have worked long and hard to make their sacrifice a worthy one.

I am not sure anyone truly understands exactly how the device works, but it does work. A human of great faith connected to the Machine can transfer his spiritual energy into the device. This energy serves to reinforce the great seal we have placed around the Beast, keeping it chained. It is not a solution to the problem, but it buys us valuable time.

We dare not reveal this to the wider world. Our cause is just, but it must remain secret. Knowledge of such an entity would tear mankind asunder, threatening our collective sanity and what we now believe is truth.

FETTERED AND FREE

Alas, we do not know for how long the great seal will hold, and while held in body, the fiend is unfettered in spirit. It cannot leave the warding, but it can reach out into the minds of men. It whispers to me in my dreams, telling me terrible things, wondrous things.

It whispered to others, drove them mad. I think it may even have possessed them, but my specialty is not in such matters. Those who sought to leave were, by my own hand, convinced to stay for the greater good. I condemned them to the fires of Hell and for that I will surely pay in due time.

Some killed themselves in manners too unpleasant to commit to eternity in writing.

Others chose to take their own lives, removing themselves from the One's grace through their mortal sin. I could not understand their actions, for what could drive a man to seek Hell for eternity rather than live for an instant longer? But now I am beginning to understand. My faith is strong and I will resist to the end. I am, after all, the last of my kind.

THE OPENER OF THE WAYS

WAR MASTER'S NOTES

Welcome to *The Opener of the Ways*, a standalone scenario written for the *Necropolis 2350* campaign setting. This adventure deals with the mature themes of violence and illegal drugs. It does not glamorize drug abuse in any way, but the contents may not be suitable for younger audiences. Parental discretion is advised.

If you intend to play in this adventure, you should **stop reading now**. Advanced knowledge of the scenario will only spoil your enjoyment of the game.

The WM should read the entire adventure before play begins. Knowing the basic flow and details in advance will greatly speed up play and make the game run smoother. Many of the bit-part actors don't have unique stat blocks. Rather, they share common stats, thus giving the GM some generic archetypes he can reuse in other *Necropolis* adventures.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

You need a copy of the *Savage Worlds* rule book and the *Necropolis: 2350 Savage Setting*. The *Necropolis* Figure Flats are recommended. GM's may find the *Necropolis 2351-55 Update* of use, though it isn't required to play the adventure.

CHARACTERS

This adventure is designed for a squad of four Knights with 25–35 XPs (Seasoned Rank), though higher-experienced characters should be able to cope if they use their brains. For larger groups, or more experienced characters, the WM needs to adjust the number and stats of opponents appropriately, to create an exciting challenge.

Use the archetypes from the *Necropolis 2350* setting book if you need pre-generated characters. Each archetype has been designed

as a starting character. As such, those used should be advanced as the player wishes to bring them to 25 XPs.

WM BACKGROUND

Despite being a military game, not every *Necropolis* adventure need involve the heroes being on the frontline. Knights also serve as police within their Preceptory estate. Although this role typically falls to Sergeants, Knights are sent onto the streets to give them a break from frontline duties. In this particular mission, investigative and social skills will prove just as useful as combat skills.

The GM should also note that there is plentiful opportunity for roleplaying in this adventure. However, not every detail of possible conversations is spelled out in black and white. The conversations could take any number of turns, and so the GM is free to go with the flow as required.

Many moons ago, a liche was contacted, through an oracle, by a demon of the Dark Dimension known as Upuaut (pronounced “wepwawet”). Upuaut, the Opener of the Ways, has long been known to mankind. Indeed, the ancient Egyptians even worshipped him as a god. According to their mythology, he opened the gates of the underworld to allow souls to travel through to the afterlife. In truth, he serves the opposite function—his purpose was, and still is, to open the gateway to the Dark Dimension and allow the Dark to escape back into the universe.

It told the liche how to harvest the cerebral fluid of a psion and combine it with necromantic energy, to create a powerful weapon—a drug.

In order to create the drug, the liche needed a psion of suitable power. His lucky break came just a few weeks later, when

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traitors in the CIS reported the arrest of a powerful psion. The liche acted quickly, arranging for the psion to be “executed” by his agents. In truth, he was smuggled out of captivity and into the hands of the Rephaim. Heavily sedated, he has since been kept imprisoned, his brain fluid harvested for its precious DNA.

Highly addictive, and with the added side effect of granting users both psionic abilities and psychotic tendencies, the liche has arranged for the manufacture and distribution of the drug through human dupes. The liche’s only problem is that the brain fluid rapidly loses potency. As such, it has had no choice but to keep the prisoner close to the manufacturing facility. Unfortunately for the Knights, the location he has chosen to test his new product is their Preceptory estate.

No liche worth his status would ever risk his flesh by leaving the sanctity of his Stygian Tower. The liche has appointed a greater mummy by the name of Clyterravix to oversee the operation.

Gateway serves Upuaut’s agenda in three ways. First, Gateway has the potential to spread chaos and disorder. Second, it is forming an army of drug users eager for another fix and willing to do most anything for a hit. As any Rephaim with a brain knows, the downtrodden and desperate make for easy converts. Third, Upuaut believes, and always has believed, that releasing enough psychic energy in the world will rip open the fabric of reality and free his entropic master.

GATEWAY’S EFFECTS

Gateway has the chemical effects of closing the pathways of the brain which control psychic activity. In the vast majority of humans, these pathways are open circuits, thus preventing any form of psionics. In a few rare cases, the pathways close, creating what are known as psion.

When a dose is injected, the user undergoes a startling series of revelations as the networks close. In most cases these appear spiritual, but that is more a result of Church conditioning than anything else. In truth, these are demonically-influenced “epiphanies.”

The user gains a Psionic die exactly as per the Variable Ability from the rogue psion (see the *Necropolis 2351-2355 Update*). He also gains three powers determined at random each time, as per the rogue psion’s Variable Power

ability, and 1d4 x 10 Power Points. These benefits remain for just ten minutes. Once the drug wears off, the user remembers very little except feeling powerful and divinely inspired.

Multiple doses serve to extend the duration by 10 minutes and grant an extra +10 Power Points. They don’t affect the Psionics die or grant more powers.

Unfortunately, the user becomes unhinged while under the drug’s influence. He may perceive those around him as Rephaim agents or heretics and try to cleanse them using his new powers, believe he has been appointed as a divine messenger, using powers like *puppet* to convince people of the error of their ways, or use his new powers for perverted or criminal means. However it affects the user, it makes them generally nasty.

For NPCs, the WM need only make them behave like psychotics or sociopaths with a messiah complex. Should a player character take it, the WM should take him aside and instruct him how to act. Should he fail to roleplay this side effect, the WM should take control of his character until the drug wears off.

Gateway is highly addictive. For some, the psychic power it grants is enough to get them hooked. For most, the visions they receive are the hook. A user must make a Spirit roll, with an additional –1 penalty for each dose used in the same hour, or become an addict. He gains the Major Habit Hindrance.

ACT 1: MURDER MOST HORRID

The Knights have been pulled back from the frontline and put to work as part of the police force in a local town. Their area of operations covers three residential districts in the south side of the town, one of the poorer parts. The citizens aren’t wicked by nature—they’re just frustrated and bored. Still, that leads to a life of sin (according to Church analysts and propaganda).

For the last month you’ve been working undercover, investigating suspected heretical cults. The few leads you uncovered haven’t lead to any arrests, but there’s a strange feeling around town—something is definitely going on.

Life undercover has meant a few changes to your usual routine—you’ve been allowed to grow your hair long and sport beards, have been handling money,

have committed a few minor sins (for which you have been granted absolution), and rather than living in the Preceptory you've rented roach infested rooms in a rundown tenement block. Armaments have also been Corporate issue, rather than Church weaponry.

SCENE 1: PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS

The Knights begin the mission in the Preceptory briefing room, having been called in by the Preceptor Intelligence Officer, the *de facto* head of police for the Preceptory. Read aloud, paraphrase, or hand out the Mission Briefing (page 98). Once the briefing is concluded, the Knights have some investigating to do before they can hit the streets.

THE SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE

The surveillance footage is available for viewing whenever the Knights are ready. The Preceptory has an imaging enhancement suite, as well. The basic footage is available as Player Handout #2 (page 99).

Enhancing the imagery requires a successful Common Knowledge roll from a character with a technical background, such as a Knight Combat Engineer or a hero with a technical Knowledge skill. With success, the video shows the killer pulls a syringe from his coat and injects himself in the hand after punching the victim to the ground. His look of absolute ecstasy begins a few moments later and his disappearance only a short while after that.

Success also produces an image of the killer's face of good enough resolution to run through the main Church database, which contains files on all citizens on the census. It also ties into the standard criminal database. Because the Preceptory works alongside the Inquisition, they have limited access to CIS criminal records as well.

AUDIO INFORMATION

The audio track from the surveillance camera is terrible. Lips can be seen moving, but the sound is horribly distorted. Cleaning up the signal requires a Common Knowledge roll, as detailed above.

With success, the Knights glean the following information. The victim was apparently the brother of the killer. From the discussion it seems the victim entered the club earlier to search for his brother. He tells him several

times he has to stop using drugs and get his act together. Unfortunately, he never uses his name.

Shortly before the killer vanished, he hissed the words, "*Stay back! You're one of them! You're a Rephaim! God has made me your judge!*" There are shouts of pain and pleas to stop during the attack from the victim, but the killer does not speak again.

THE CORPSE

The victim of the assault is in the local hospital's morgue. His identification card and driving license confirm his identity as one Benedict Garantia, an assembly line worker at a small automobile factory. His next of kin have already been informed of his death.

A casual glance at the corpse reveals multiple stab wounds to the neck and torso. Both hands and forearms are lacerated, indicating defensive wounds. Any Knight with Healing d6 has the skill to perform a basic autopsy. A lab is available to handle any blood and tissue tests the Knight wants.

Have the hero performing the autopsy make a Common Knowledge roll. (If the heroes lack the Healing skill, a coroner is brought in to perform the autopsy. He doesn't need to make a skill roll, but he only grants the information for a success.)

With success, the Knight confirms the cause of death was blood loss, due to injuries consistent with a frenzied stabbing. Several blows punctured Garantia's heart and lungs, though they did not kill him instantly. There's a good chance the victim was alive for several minutes after the attack ended. A raise allows the Knight to know the blows were delivered with immense force. Several ribs are cracked where the weapon's hilt or attacker's fist slammed home.

Toxicology tests, if requested, indicate no traces of alcohol or drugs, illegal, legal (such as nicotine), or prescription, in the victim's system.

WITNESS STATEMENTS

One of the Knights' fellow Lances investigated the initial scene and collected witness statements. All corroborate the video evidence. None of them witnessed the attack or saw any signs of the attacker afterward. The Knights are free to follow up these statements with their own line of questioning, but no one changes their story. It's a dead end.

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RUNNING ID

There are two main resources the heroes can search for an identity and address for the killer. If they've cleaned up the video image, they can run his picture through the official census records. Otherwise, they can use the audio track in combination with the ID of the victim to search for the surname Garantia and check out each record until they find a match.

Either method requires a Common Knowledge roll (the system is designed to be easy to use). Because there are two possible ways forward, the Knights can run both simultaneously, thus allowing them to double-check any findings. With success, the Knight locates an image of the killer. His name is Eduardo Garantia, unemployed and with a rap sheet for petty theft and drug abuse.

He has served time in jail on two occasions and is currently on his final warning—one more arrest and he's scheduled to be shipped off to a reeducation camp so he can be turned back into a productive member of society. His address places his domicile just a few blocks from the Straw Man, on the sixth floor of an apartment block (apartment 14 on that floor).

An alternative is to take the video images to Garantia's mother, to see if she can identify the killer. The poor woman is in a state of deep shock, as one would expect, but agrees to see the Knights. When shown the images, she gasps loudly, clutches her chest, and promptly collapses—the poor woman has suffered a massive heart attack! Unless immediate first aid is immediately administered (a Healing roll at -4), she dies in 2d6 rounds. Yep, it's rough on the players, but life isn't all sweetness and roses in *Necropolis*.

Should the Knights learn Garantia's identity but visit the mother to inform her of the identity of her son's killer, she suffers heart failure at that point instead.

When she recovers (a few hours is enough for her to talk), she reveals the killer's identity—her wayward son, Eduardo. She can provide his address, but claims she hasn't seen him in almost a year. *"He started using drugs, so I told him to clean up or clear out. He cleared out. You do whatever you have to to bring him to justice. He killed Benedict, and he has to pay the price for that. The Lord will judge him in his own way."*

SCENE 2: ARRESTING DEVELOPMENTS

Garantia's apartment block is typical of those across Vatican Town—Gothic in style, constructed of gray concrete, blackened through pollution, and rundown. It comprises ten stories with twenty apartments on each floor.

An alleyway runs along the rear of the building. A fire escape from each apartment leads into the alley. The Knights have enough information to locate the windows of Garantia's apartment in case they want to enter that way or prevent an escape attempt. His blinds are down, preventing clear view into the apartment and thus foiling snipers. The elevators rarely work in these places, and this block is no exception.

A letterbox in the foyer confirms Garantia's apartment number (#6-14). Opening it requires a Lockpicking roll at +1 and a set of electronic picks. It has Toughness 8 if a hero wants to break the lock. (This isn't illegal under Church law, as Garantia is a suspect in a murder case.) Inside are a handful of final demands for electricity, water, and vidphone bills to be settled.

The latter may prove useful to the Knights, as it lists Garantia's vidphone number. They can call him (withholding their image) to see if he's in before they head upstairs.

CONCERNED CITIZEN

As the heroes reach the 6th floor, an apartment door swings open with a bang. A middle-aged woman steps into the corner. Her hair is bedraggled, her skin sallow, and her clothes stained with food and sweat. She eyes the Knights for a moment, and then shouts, *"Typical! You never come here on social visits, do ya? Oh no, it's always guns drawn and ready to kill some innocent citizen! Who is it this time, eh? Who's going to disappear off to a camp?"*

Unless the Knights are quick to shut the woman up, other citizens drift into the hallway. The mood turns ugly, as the downtrodden citizens find the courage to begin shouting abuse at the Knights. Any overt threats (like shoving a gun in someone's face and warning them to back down) have a disastrous effect—the crowd turns violent!

The woman (Martha Higgs, no criminal record) can be calmed surprisingly easily—all the heroes need do is mention Garantia's

name. *"That lowlife piece of crap in number 14? About damn time you turned up to ship his ass off to a camp!"* She refuses to elucidate further on her reasons for wanting Garantia arrested.

Citizens (3 per hero): Use Citizen stats from *Necropolis* 2350.

TURNING THE TABLES

This section assumes the Knights enter via the front door without knocking (Garantia doesn't answer if they do opt for the polite approach). Going through the front door requires either a Lockpicking roll or overcoming the door's Toughness of 8. Change the

wording appropriately if they decide to enter via the fire escape (or by blowing a hole in the wall from the neighboring apartment).

No matter when or how the Knights gain access to his apartment, Garantia has just finished injecting himself with a dose of Gateway.

The lock gives and the door crashes inward. A lone man, who matches the images of Eduardo Garantia, straightens from his crouched position, his face twisted with a terrible smile. You've seen that smile before on the faces of fanatics and madmen. He stretches out a hand toward you, dropping a syringe to the floor, and



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bissing loudly as he does, "So the Rephaim have come to me. You'll all die, for I am God's vengeance made manifest!"

Deal action cards as normal. Garantia is far too paranoid to be taken by Surprise.

Garantia begins by using *fear*, which takes the form of terrible visions of the victim being flayed alive, and draws his pistol. On round two, he uses *bolt* (a wave of psionic energy that causes internal bleeding and severe mental trauma), and fires a double tap at the nearest Knight. On the third round, he activates *deflection* and fires another double tap. During subsequent rounds he makes use of his powers and weapons as best fits the situation.

Roll on the Incapacitation Table as normal for Garantia when he takes more than three wounds. It doesn't matter to the adventure whether Garantia is taken alive or gunned down, but there's no need for the WM to kill him off unnecessarily.

The apartment contains two clues, which allow the Knights to progress further in their investigation without having to interrogate Garantia. The first is the syringe he dropped (it's the only one in his apartment). The second is a business card for the Straw Man club.

Eduardo Garantia: See page 94.

HERESY IN LIQUID FORM

The syringe Garantia dropped as the Knights entered is engraved with a small symbol that resembles a partially open door, obviously some sort of drug symbol. It's a new one on the Knights, though, no matter how experienced they are.

Options for tracking down the symbol and its meaning, include using the Preceptory database for similar finds (Investigation roll), asking their comrades (Streetwise roll), asking around the streets (Streetwise at -4, because no one talks to Knights), or using appropriate Connections. On any success they learn the drug is called Gateway. It's new, but it's sweeping the streets like wildfire. Users speak of experiencing divine revelations and feeling powerful. War Masters can find details about Gateway on page 74.

There is a tiny amount of drug left in the syringe, but the Knights don't have the capabilities of analyzing it until they return to the Preceptory. Even then, it requires a Knowledge (Chemistry) roll at -4 or has to be handed over to the lab technicians (who take a whole day to run their tests).

Success, or an NPC analysis, reveals the drug is actually 99.9% harmless chemicals, the sort of chemicals mixed in with medical drugs to help them break down in the body or stabilize them in solid form. However, the 0.1% remaining appears to be human DNA, although in an unusual form. The lab technicians have never seen anything like it before.

A raise on the roll, or two days with the lab boys, reveals the purpose of the mystery chemical—it closes the synapses which are purportedly responsible for psionic abilities. In essence, it makes the user a psion for a short while. It is also highly addictive, at least to laboratory rats. (Rumors the Church conducts such experiments on condemned prisoners are popular, but unproven.)

DNA

Running the DNA sequence through the database produces an interesting result—the owner's file has been security locked by the CIS. Since the Knights are only accessing the records through a database, they can't hack in and try to reverse the lock.

INTERROGATION

If Garantia is taken alive, he can be interrogated. Church law does not give heretics the right to legal representation or medical treatment, though if Garantia is unconscious he'll need basic first aid before he can be questioned. A paramedic team arrives after 1d4 x 5 minutes if backup is called. They have Healing d8.

Once Garantia is conscious, the questioning can begin. Gateway users have no recollection of their paranoid delusions or psychic powers, so the killer vehemently denies anything beyond getting high. He won't reveal details about his dealer, either, at least not under conventional interrogation.

Showing him the video of him killing his brother causes him to crack. At first he tries to deny it, but as he watches the tape he begins to break down. By the time the footage has ended, Garantia is willing to give up his dealer. He doesn't know his name, but the pusher is always in Booth #3 at the Straw Man Club between 1900 and 2100 hours.

The Knights aren't responsible for judging criminals, so Garantia is sent elsewhere to be processed. They learn within a few hours that Garantia has been shipped to a reeducation camp for a lengthy spell. In truth, Garantia never reaches the camp—CIS agents involved in the plot take him away for further study.

SCENE 3: ORDER FROM ABOVE

Whether the Knights report their findings to the PIO or not, he quickly hears of the results of the investigation and summons them to his office.

"I've read the case file, and this looks serious. You're to resume undercover duties with immediate effect. Your orders are to track down Gateway's manufacturer, and put him out of business with terminal force. Your best hope is to try and infiltrate the gang selling the crap, and then work upwards any way you can—drug gangs always need troops, and we produce some of the best-trained warriors on Salus.

"However, you must act with subtlety. These gangs aren't stupid. If they suspect you're undercover agents, you'll be speaking to God quicker than you'd like. Likewise, we can't afford for you to start rushing around and warn the top dog.

"And don't communicate with anyone except me about this—God knows the local police station leaks information like a sieve. If the CIS find out about this drug, they'll get a Papal Interdiction Warrant and take over the case. Even if we can block them, you can bet your butt word will get out onto the streets. You'll be provided with a boosted comlink set to a frequency that'll reach me directly. Day or night, I'm here for you.

"Finally, we've put all the Knight Lances currently serving with the Lictors on high alert. If you need backup, you ask. Don't be heroes!

"Now, get down to the stores, and take whatever Corporate gear you want. Dismissed."

UNDERCOVER WORK

The Knights' undercover identities now come into play. As far as the criminal underworld knows, the Knights are freelance criminals. Tell the players they need to come up with some basic cover stories for their new identities. They can make these as elaborate and detailed as they wish, but should include a new name, a brief history, and any criminal record a Knight fancies taking. Church records will be doctored accordingly to register any jail terms, previous employment records, or current warrants for arrest.

Unless a character has Knowledge (Union), adopting the background of an ex-Corporate employee or soldier is not a wise move—with-

out the skill, the Knight knows next to nothing about the true workings of the Union. If he runs into another criminal who's really in the Union, his cover story will be broken in minutes.

You might also wish to remind them that electing to be an ex-Knight is an easy cover, but a whole team of ex-Knights is going to raise eyebrows. Suggest, if necessary, that at least a few opt to be Sergeants. Sergeants are more plentiful, aren't beholden to the Ordines quite so strictly, and, if they embark on a criminal career, are naturally inclined to follow ex-Knights.

Heroes with the Arcane Background (Miracles) Edge actually have a very convenient cover story already available if they wish. When the Pope ordered that all Faithful report for duty with the Ordines or Church, many chose instead to flee underground. Any high combat skills are easily accounted for by having to survive on the mean streets and stay one step ahead of the Inquisition.

The characters have access to any Corporate personal gear they want—rifles, pistols, grenades, electronic lockpicks, the works. There's no need for rocket launchers or other heavy weapons, though. The only armor they're allowed to take is a light armor breastplate (+4 Armor, torso only) in one of the various Corporate designs. This fits under loose clothing. In addition, the Senior Knight receives 1,000 Meters in hard currency.

ACT 2: THE LOWER RUNGS

The Knights have a lead, and it's one they can't afford to lose. If the Knights interrogated Garantia, they know when and where the dealer will be present. If Garantia was killed, they'll need to work out another way to find their man.

SCENE 1: THE STRAW MAN CLUB

The Straw Man Club has a valid license for 24-hour entertainment and the sale of alcohol. It also has a current health and safety certificate. The owners know that drugs are sold on the premises, but turn a blind eye in return for regular kickbacks.

The police know drug-trafficking goes on, but they allow the club to remain open. It's easier for them to keep an eye on the criminals if they know where they are, and shutting down the site would simply move them elsewhere.

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The club is the subject of several ongoing investigations by the local police, but none involve the distribution of Gateway.

Once inside, the Knights enter a world of loud music, dim lights, heavy smoke, and gyrating bodies. As far as dens of vice go, this one is up there with the best. Treat the lighting conditions as Dim (-1).

Locating the table is easy enough, but regardless of what time the characters enter the club there's no one seated at it. Should they not have learned the exact details of where to meet the dealer, they'll need to make Streetwise rolls to learn of the table.

Before the dealer arrives, the GM should run a few cameo encounters. A sample is provided below, but the GM has the option of creating his own based on the various Hindrances of his particular group. There's no right or wrong outcome to any of these events—let the heroes deal with the situations as they see fit.

HERETICAL PROPAGANDA

A bespectacled youth sidles up to one of the Knights (a Chaplain would be great) and discretely shoves a flyer into his hand. A quick glance reveals it's Forsaker material, slamming the Church for its sins and proclaiming God has left man alone in the void.

The kid, Charles Montgomery, isn't a hardcore heretic—he's a disillusioned student rebelling against the system because he feels that's what students do. Still, heresy is heresy.

The Knights can try to learn more about this particular sect of Forsakers, such as trying to locate their meetinghouse. This requires a Persuasion roll, as the youth is disinclined to reveal too much to strangers right away. With success, the Knight learns the sect is just a bunch of spotty-faced students, not some ultra-dangerous sect of priest killers.

Any raid on the heretics by the Knights is up to the GM to devise—it's a complete aside to the adventure. Since they're undercover and on a major case, a good plan is just to radio in any details they learn and let their buddies take care of things.

Alternately, they might decide to lead him outside and remind him (with fists or words) that the Church is trying to save mankind from total extermination.

Student Heretic: As Low Level Criminal (page 94), but with no gear.

LOCAL TOUGHS

Some of the local goons have noticed new faces in the crowd—the Knights. Figuring it's time to remind any newcomers who's the muscle in town, they approach the hero with the lowest Strength (the wimpiest looking one).

"Well, well, well," one of the muscled-bound goons says, "looks like we've got a new face in town! Just so you know, we run business in this joint. And just so you don't forget..." With that he swings his fist.

Deal action cards. The characters must roll to avoid Surprise. No guns are drawn by the goons unless the characters do so first. Should this occur, interrupt the fight immediately, and read the text below. If the firearms aren't produced, Jago arrives on the scene just as the last thug drops.

The lead goon suddenly freezes. Peering through the smoke you can make out a man in a sharp suit standing behind him, a huge 12mm pistol jammed into the thug's temple.

"What have I told you, Johnny?" the man says quietly and calmly. "Didn't I say that if you harassed my patrons again you have to pay the price?"

The thug gulps and lowers his gun. "Look Mr. Jago, we were just having some fun. We weren't going to do too much damage, honestly." Jago motions to the door. "You have 30 seconds to vacate the club, and you'd better pray I'm not in the mood to follow you." As one, the thugs bolster their weapons and flee across the crowded dance floor.

"Local hoods think they're somebody important," Jago says, turning to you as he bolsters his pistol. "Name's Max Jago, head of security. You're new here, right?" He motions to a passing waitress. "Get these folks whatever they want from the bar on the house—the Club's way of an apology for the rude welcome. Now, are you here for anything specific or just to have a good time?"

If the heroes don't know where to meet the dealer, this is a chance to find out. Jago knows all the operators in the club, though he isn't directly involved in the drug trade. He gets bribes to look the other way, but that doesn't mean he doesn't run a tight surveillance operation.

Have each Knight make a Notice roll. Those who succeed spot a distinctive tattoo poking out from Jago's sleeve—an Incinerator tattoo. Jago has never hid the fact he served with the Ordines, and although he becomes suspicious if the Knights make mention of it, he doesn't clock them as undercover agents.

"Yeah, I did my time and served Mother Church. I served with the Incinerators for ten years before I grew disillusioned. I guess you could say I lost my faith. Too many good friends dead on the battlefield and too many hollow speeches about how they died for the righteous cause. You ever serve with the military?"

Thugs (1 per hero): Treat as Hardened Criminals (page 95), but without the usual gear. Instead, they carry 6mm pistols (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, Shots 15, Semi-auto, AP 2) and 2 mags.

Jago: Treat as a Wild Card Hardened Criminal (page 95), but without the usual gear. Instead, he sports a 12mm pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8, Shots 7, Semi-auto, AP 2) and 2 mags.

SINS OF THE FLESH

An extremely attractive (Charisma +4) girl, barely out of her teens, struts up to one of the Knights (preferably the one with the highest Charisma) and brazenly asks if he wants to dance. She's very touchy-feely and is exposing a lot of flesh.

Let the Knight handle this however he wants. Should he be inclined to dance, maybe in the hope of learning a little information, the girl hints she'd like a little more physical contact. She tries to kiss the Knight for a start, while letting her fingers roam freely. Of course, such an act is against a Knight's vow of celibacy.

If you've got an attractive female Knight in the party, then the teenager can be switched to a young man without changing any other details.

SCENE 2: THE DEALER

After you've run the cameos, the dealer, Sebastian Eisenman, arrives and takes a seat at his usual table. Hopefully by now the Knights know he's the man they need to see about Gateway. Before the characters can reach him, he's already made half a dozen sales.

When the Knights approach his table, he asks what they want. He doesn't name any specific substances, and answers questions like, "What do you have?" with a simple "Whatever you want." Play him as cautious—the guy sells drug for a living, so he isn't going to hand out menus to complete strangers.

Gateway costs 10 Meters a shot. Any hero making a Common Knowledge (–2) or Streetwise roll knows that is way below the market price of other narcotics. If questioned on the price, Eisenman says he has strict orders to sell at that price and not a Miter more.

The heroes, of course, don't want a few hits—they need to work their way up the chain of command. Eisenman, being the end dealer, is on the bottom rung—he just sells the stuff, and knows nothing about its distribution patterns or manufacture. He never touches the stuff himself.

Acquiring the information the Knights want should be roleplayed. Eisenman isn't keen on handing out details about his suppliers, so he's very cagey and nervous. For all he knows, the heroes could be a rival gang trying to muscle in on the action or even undercover Knights. Ideally, this scene should be roleplayed rather than reduced to a die roll. However, if a hero wants to roll, he needs a Persuasion roll at –4 to learn the facts.

Eisenman eventually cracks. However, before he agrees to take the Knights to his suppliers he wants to run a few details about them by the men he buys from. He asks for names, addresses, and any pertinent facts, such as a criminal record. He then gives them his address, and tells them to meet him tomorrow morning. If they check out, he'll take them to a rendezvous.

He won't mention this, but if their cover stories don't work out, he plans to take them along anyway, so the gang can kill the meddling heroes.

EISENMAN'S APARTMENT

On reaching Eisenman's apartment, the Knights discover someone has beaten them to it. The door is closed, but not locked. A Notice roll at –2 made while studying the door reveals telltale scratch marks around the electronic lock—someone hacked the code.

The dealer lies dead on the sitting room floor, his torso riddled with flechettes. His face is heavily bruised and bloodied, indicating a recent beating. If you're running this

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adventure in 2351 or later, his face is marked by the distinct impressions left by a cestus (see the 2351-55 Update).

Paranoid characters may suspect the involvement of other Knights, but as with most Church gear the combat gloves are available on the blackmarket. The same applies to flechette weapons. A quick call to the Preceptory confirms Eisenman wasn't being investigated by any other Lance, and none have reported visiting his apartment recently.

A successful Healing or Notice roll (hero's choice) made while examining the body reveals Eisenman was standing when he was shot. There's no sign of blood anywhere else, so he was likely killed where he fell.

The apartment has also been searched. An Investigation or Notice (-4) roll reveals the search wasn't random, like that of common burglars—it was very systematic and professional, leaving no stone unturned.

Whoever killed Eisenman did leave one clue, though—there's a scrap of paper in his pocket. It simply says, *"Thursday 2100, 49th and Bentley."* A Common Knowledge roll reveals there's an underground car park at that location.

SCENE 3: SHOOTING UP THE TOWN

The 49th Street car park is no different to those in the 21st century. It has several floors marked out with white-lined parking bays, ramps heading up and down, and sturdy concrete pillars to support the roof. There are no security cameras, nor is there a parking attendant. The car park serves the local apartments, and few citizens have vehicles worth more than few hundred Meters at most. Those who can afford decent cars don't live in this neighborhood.

It's up to the Knights whether they choose to arrive in advance or wait until after 2100 hours to make an appearance.

A black SUV arrives at 2050 hours and parks up near the exit ramp. Four men, all armed with Corporate weapons, climb out. Three of them fan out, their guns trained steadily on the characters, while the fourth approaches the Knights. He gruffly demands to know what the heroes are doing in the car park. Hopefully they mention that Eisenman arranged the meeting.

"Where is that little puke? Dead? Nature of the business, baby. He told us a little about you, but not enough to satisfy

the boss. You'd better be quick talkers, because," he checks his watch, "in about two minutes you're going to be dead unless you check out."

The leader of the gang, Umberto de Montfort, is a former Asgard officer. As such, he knows all about Asgard's military machine, and sees through any strange stories or inconsistencies immediately.

The important thing is that the Knights keep to whatever stories they gave Eisenman. A sudden change in details causes the soldiers to become *very* suspicious.

Interrogate two Knights (picked randomly). Before de Montfort can start on the third one, two black sedans scream into the car park and skid to a halt, disgorging a handful of armed men.

WE WANT DRUGS

"Hey," shouts one of the new arrivals, "you guys distribute Gateway, right? Don't bother lying, man; we know you sell the stuff. We want some." He smiles a broad and slightly maniacal grin. "Actually, we want all the stash in your SUV. Don't try to resist—we serve the great darkness that is the Rephaim!"

Your contact shrugs, and nods to his men. "You heard them. Let them have it, boys!" With that, gunfire booms in the enclosed space as both sides open fire!

The second party is a bunch of violent Immortalists led by a corrupt priest. They've discovered the joys of Gateway, and believe it will grant them the power to take on the Sacri Ordines. Rather than pay for it, though, they intend to acquire the shipment by force.

Hand out Ally Sheets for de Montfort and his men—they all share the same stats. Deal action cards. Split the cultists into two groups for action card purposes.

The car park measures 24" to a side. The entrance and exit ramps are in opposite corners. Aside from the SUV and two sedans, there are a dozen parked cars spread around the level. Ten pillars, each filling a 1" square, should be placed in logical positions.

The heroes and their newfound allies begin within 4" of the SUV. The cultists start 13" away, just in front of their cars. In the first round, the heretics move to take cover behind their vehicles while blasting away with their pistols.

The SUV provides +3 Armor to characters using it for cover. Other vehicles in the car park provide +2 Armor only. The pillars are essentially indestructible—chunks can be blown off, but the steel reinforcing rods running through them mean only explosive charges can bring them down.

Umberto De Montfort: See page 94.

Hardened Criminals (1 per hero): See page 95.

Corrupt Priest: See page 95.

Cultists (2 per hero): See page 95.

A WELCOME ADDITION

Once the dust has settled and the last corpses stopped twitching, de Montfort slaps the nearest hero on the back.

"Now that, my friends," he laughs, "was an initiation by fire. You banded yourselves pretty well there. Quick reactions to an ever-changing situation and gratuitous use of violence! Okay, I'll take you to see the boss. You've earned that much at least. Hop in the SUV and we'll take you there now. I'm Umberto de Montfort, by the way. Call me anything except Monty, baby."

Any attempts to avoid a meeting with "the boss" are met with the reply that this is a one-time offer—the group either comes now, or they lose the opportunity.

ACT 3: CLIMBING THE LADDER

The SUV heads out of the residential area and into the neighboring industrial zone. Tall chimneys belch black, acrid smoke day and night, the steady thump of hidden machinery echoes eerily through the gray sky, the buildings lack even basic maintenance, and what few residential apartment blocks exist are covered in thick layers of soot.

During the trip, the heroes might have a few questions for de Montfort. Possible questions posed by the Knights and de Montfort's answers are detailed below.

The goon doesn't know everything about his organization, nor does he ever let on in advance "the boss" is a woman—it simply doesn't occur to him that it's important in the 24th century. If the Knights ask questions not detailed below, the GM should feel free to answer with a simple, "Not my concern."

Q: What's the boss' name?

A: "Heb, you know, I've never asked. I don't care, either. So long as the money keeps coming in, I'm bappy with that arrangement."

Q: Where are you taking us?

A: "Be patient, baby. We'll be there soon. If we wanted you dead, we could have bosed you during the firefight back there."

Q: Is the pay good?

A: "A thousand Miters a month. That's tax free, of course," he laughs loudly.

Q: How many people are in the organization?

A: "In ours, about a dozen. I know the boss has ties to other outfits, though. You sure ask a lot of questions."

SCENE 1: MEET THE BOSS

After a few more minutes, the SUV pulls into a disused factory site. The driver pulls the vehicle into an old warehouse, safely out of sight of any passing patrols. De Montfort then asks the heroes to hand over any weapons.

"You know the drill, baby," he smiles. "Strangers don't get near the boss if they're armed. We've shown you a lot of trust letting you keep your tools this far, so now it's payback time. If you want a receipt, just ask," he adds with a broad grin.

De Montfort doesn't ask the Knights to dispose of any other gear, though he accepts it if the Knights start handing over equipment.

Once the Knights are disarmed (they can keep their armor), de Montfort leads them up a stairwell and into the adjoining building—a former canning facility, long since shut down. Crossing the factory floor, which is covered in rusting machinery, de Montfort stops outside a metal door. He knocks twice, and is answered by a panel being slid across. A pair of eyes can be made out through the gap.

"Hey, baby," the goon grins. "It's me and the boys. I've got a report for the boss and some potential new blood."

A few moments later the door opens, to reveal a bronzed, muscular man. He eyes the party up and down, briefly, nods, and opens the door wider.

The decay of the facility is in stark contrast to the opulence behind the door. What was probably once an office is now

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decorated with works of art, marble busts, and antique, wooden furniture. The floor is covered in a thick carpet of deep red bues.

Seated behind a desk is a woman, her long hair falling to her shoulders. Porcelain-white skin and a beautiful face are marred only by an ugly, purple scar, which runs from her right temple to her chin. You've seen such injuries before—the telltale mark of a molecular sword blade slicing through flesh. As you enter, she looks up, raising an eyebrow at de Montfort.

The criminal quickly explains about the cultist attack on their drop, and praises you several times for your reactions and marksmanship. He adds, "Boss, these guys would make a great addition to the team. Their identities check out to the max."

The woman stands and walks over to you, her booted footsteps muffled by the carpet. "So," she says, "you want to join my operation? What makes you think you've got what I need?"

It's time for the heroes to brag a little. No die rolls are required—just allow the Knights to talk up their skills and Edges. Alexandria, the boss, has need for gunmen, drivers, explosives experts, thieves (anyone with Lockpicking and Stealth would qualify), as well as unregistered Faithful—basically, she wants what the Knights can provide.

Heroes who make a Notice roll at -4 spot hidden lust in the boss' gaze toward them. She's mentally undressing them and visualizing them in a variety of interesting roles—willing or otherwise!

Although the Knights may have the skills she wants, she doesn't trust them an inch—not yet, anyway. To earn a place in her organization, the Knights are going to have to perform a job for her, and it won't be one they relish. She will, if asked directly, reveal her name—she's never made a secret of it.

Alexandria Vancelli: See page 96.

Umberto De Montfort: See page 94.

Hardened Criminals (1 per hero): See page 95.

THE JOB OFFER

After listening to the Knights' boasts about their prowess, some of which de Montfort confirms, Alexandria sits on the edge of her desk.

"Okay, it sounds like you've got the skills I need. Even if you hadn't, I always need more," she casts a glance at her servant and then smiles at you, "servants around the place. Now I need to know if I can trust you, and that means putting you to the test.

"Tomorrow at midday, I want you to assassinate someone, someone who has endangered my organization more than once. You kill him, and you get added to the payroll. You fail, and don't bother coming back. Any questions?"

Hopefully the heroes have at least one question—who is the target? Alexandria smiles a devilish grin. "Oh," she says, "you'll learn that in the morning. De Montfort will show you to your quarters. Details on the bit will be sent along shortly."

SCENE 2: PLANS, INFORMATION, AND SNEAKING

The Knights' quarters are in another part of the factory. Accommodation isn't just basic; it's practically primitive. Rusty iron beds with moldy mattresses, blankets which would give a Rephaim second thought about wrapping them around its flesh, a bucket for a toilet (thankfully empty), and a sink in which the water runs a nasty shade of green.

De Montfort throws the Knights a few Union-issue ration packs—the food is tasteless but nutritious. Just like the Church rations, each can of food in the pack contains heating chemicals to cook the mush. Rations packs also come with a simple spoon and fork combination (a spork).

"Don't leave your quarters," de Montfort adds as he leaves. "The boss doesn't like guests walking around unescorted. You need anything, you boller for me, baby."

The characters have an hour to kill before de Montfort returns with the briefing information. They can hear footsteps echoing around during that hour. Any Knight who peeks outside sees de Montfort and his men pacing around at sporadic intervals. They don't appear to be guarding the heroes, but simply doing whatever it is they do.

The briefing file contains photographs of a building in town. Have each Knight make a Common Knowledge roll. Preachers gain a +2 bonus. With success, they recognize it as the

local recruiting office for the Ordo. On a raise, the Knight has served in the office and knows the layout.

The GM should design an appropriate street map based on his hometown and provide a sketch for the characters. Essentially, the map has a road with shops and offices on each side.

De Montfort, who hands over the folder, provides the following information:

- * The target will be wearing medium armor.

- * The Knights will be equipped with 12mm SMGs, armor piercing rounds, and one mono-filament grenade each. All weapons will be provided by the boss before the mission begins.

- * The target will arrive outside the building at 1015 hours, along with his bodyguards. He is to be eliminated before he enters the building. If the characters need to take out the guards as well, then that's their choice.

- * De Montfort will accompany the party on behalf of the boss to keep an eye on the heroes and ensure they don't have a change of heart.

CHECKING IN

Although the characters don't have any weapons, they do have the secure communicator. Should they have forgotten its existence, give them a prompt—the players may have forgotten, but hardened soldiers would remember such lifesaving details.

If they contact the Preceptory about the planned raid, they are informed by the Preceptor Intelligence Officer Manager, who answers the call personally, that he and the Preceptor Media & Merchandizing Officer are paying a visit to the recruiting office tomorrow, along with a Lance of Knights. They're due to arrive at 1015 hours.

He orders the Knights to do what they must to fulfill their primary objective—tracking down and eliminating the source of Gateway is far too important. He'll make his peace with God, he adds, before tomorrow dawns.

The characters might also ask him to check background details on Alexandria Vancelli and Umberto de Montfort. Searching the databases takes an hour, so he'll call them back. When he does get back in touch, he provides the following information:

Vancelli: Before he hands over any data, the PIO asks the characters to confirm the name. He even asks for a physical description.

"Alexandria Vancelli, age 29. Records indicate she grew up in a Church orphanage after her father abandoned her at the age of six. Mother died when she was four. No criminal record, but that's probably because she's smart enough not to get caught."

"She visited a psychiatrist several years ago. Under Church law, doctor-patient confidentiality ended when he suddenly disappeared. Vancelli was a suspect, but no evidence was found and no charges pushed. Apparently she has several perversions and fantasies of a sexual nature involving domination of men."

De Montfort: *"Umberto de Montfort, age 37. Apparently de Montfort is a Valballa graduate. He served with Asgard for six years, reaching the rank of full captain before being sent to their stockade in northern Midgard. Asgard isn't exactly on good terms with us, so we don't have any other details to hand. After that he vanished. He only appeared on Church records when he entered the domain after his release. Since then he hasn't had a job or paid any taxes, and his census records are non-existent. I guess he went underground and stayed there."*

De Montfort was an Asgard officer, just like his record says. However, he never served time in prison. For the last six years, he's been serving with the Preachers! He spent four years out in the boondocks training militia, before going undercover to infiltrate a drug ring. His record with the Church has been doctored to remove all trace of his Preacher service as part of his cover. The PIO knows the truth, but isn't about to break his cover.

SNEAKING AROUND

Once the briefing is over, the heroes are locked in their quarters for the night. Naturally, they may want to go for a midnight walk and try and uncover a little information of their own. The aim of the section is to let them find some clues, but without making it look like they *have* to find them.

As such, the GM should have the Knights hear a passing sentry every now and then and ask for Stealth rolls. Don't worry if anyone fails—a second sentry calls the first one away just as he reaches the character's poor choice of hiding place.

Escaping the barracks requires a Lockpicking roll (–2 if the heroes don't have any lockpicks). A critical failure activates an alarm, which brings de Montfort and four goons running. The char-

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acters are then thoroughly searched and warned to stay put. A sentry is posted outside the door for good measure.

The obvious place to begin checking for clues is Vancelli's office. Cracking the lock is a little trickier, and requires a Lockpicking roll at -2. Again, a critical failure activates an alarm. Should bennies not be spent on this critical failure, de Montfort and his boys arrive 2d6 rounds later, and they're prepared to shoot first and worry about the mess later unless the heroes invent a *very* good excuse for breaking into the boss' office.

Vancelli's bedroom adjoins the office, but it's obvious from the noise she's otherwise occupied with a guest. There are two sources of information.

Computer Terminal: The first is a computer terminal, which is linked to the Stream, the Church equivalent of the internet. Basic functions aren't password locked, but all the important files are.

Hacking the system requires a Common Knowledge roll, but with restrictions. A Combat Engineer can make the roll at -2, since repairing computers and encoding systems is part of their routine work. Unless another hero's backstory specifically mentions he's a computer whiz, he can't make the roll—hacking is beyond untrained heroes in the time available. The characters don't know enough about her background to start guessing mother's name or important birthdays.

The encrypted files contain the usual lists of drop off points, bank account details, illegal shipments of guns and ammo, and so on. Only two files are of any immediate use. The first, entitled "Open Sesame," contains details of the gang's Gateway shipments. It mentions the name Uriel as a contact and indicates several meetings on the east side of town (the really bad slums where even Knights travel in Prophets for safety at night), but nothing else of use.

The second file is more disturbing—it's a file on the Preceptor Intelligence Officer, and contains photos taken at public engagements and personal information. None of the data is about secret Ordo projects. Should the Knights contact the PIO, he tells them it's not unusual for criminals to know their enemy.

Vidphone: Aside from the computer, there is also a vidphone panel. Vidphones work much like 21st century telephones, but display video images. They share common features, such as last number redial and speed dial. Vancelli's

last caller withheld their number, so there's no chance of discovering its origin. Every speed dial number in Vancelli's system is a codename.

Have the characters make Common Knowledge (-2) or Knowledge (Church) rolls if they have hacked the computer. With success, they recognize one name—Phanuel. It's a variant of Uriel.

Uriel is actually a mummy, and the *de facto* head of the Gateway manufacturing operation. Vancelli has no idea about his origins.

Should they be so bold as to dial the number, the screen flickers into life after a few moments. Unless the heroes have withheld the visual feed at their end, their faces will be shown to whoever answers the call. Should they forget, allow them a Common Knowledge roll at -2. With success, they can hit the withhold button just before the call is answered.

The receiver is shrouded in darkness and no visual details are discernible. His voice, however, has a deep bass tone and a slightly disturbing quality. He demands to know who the Knights are and what they want—Vancelli also hides her number, so Uriel has no idea the location from where they are calling. It's up to the characters how they respond. Any verbal communication could endanger their mission if the shadowy figure hears them speak later.

Passing the number dialed back to the Preceptory doesn't help. The call is being forwarded via several exchanges. Tracking it down could take days without involving the CIS.

Vidphones also have one additional feature of note, as the Knights would know—private vidphones can be set to record live conversations, utilizing both voice and image storage. The crime lord has set a password on hers. Cracking it is as per the rules above. The codeword is obscure, and can't be guessed blindly.

With success, the last message replays. The caller is the same individual as described above. The call discusses increasing the amount of Gateway distributed and mentions a meeting, which is to be held tomorrow night. The location is given simply as "the usual place."

If the WM wishes to create a follow-up adventure, there is a second stored message. When replayed, it shows a Lazarite Knight in full armor. He's discussing buying Gateway, but no firm deal is reached. This could be an agent involved with Project Messiah, thus dragging the heroes into a greater conspiracy, or just a drug-user who wants a fix. In the latter case, the Lazarite should belong to the Knights' Pre-

ceptory. A little investigation would be required to track down his identity, as the only clues are battle scars on his armor and his voice.

SCENE 3: THE HIT

The following morning, the Knights are given a hearty breakfast of Corporate ration packs and lukewarm coffee. After dining, de Montfort leads them to an armory and hands them each 12mm Asgard SMGs, three magazines, and a single monofilament grenade.

Any Knight who checks the magazine discovers they are fitted with what appear to be standard Asgard armor piercing rounds. He can also make a Notice roll at -2. With success, he discovers the ammunition isn't actually what it seems—the tips, although AP rounds in appearance, don't look right. De Montfort quickly notices any hero studying the ammo, and tells him to lock and load immediately as the boss is waiting. He won't raise the subject of the rounds, nor will he answer questions about the ammo. Instead, he just replies, *"Hub, guess you ain't the soldier you think you are, baby."*

De Montfort has switched the ammunition for low-impact rounds commonly used in live-fire exercises. The SMGs inflict normal damage, only it's nonlethal. They have no AP rating, either. The grenades are fakes as well. They explode, but it's all flash and smoke.

Once he learned of the nature of the hit, he contacted the local Preceptor Intelligence Officer through his own methods and made arrangements to stage the fight. The Knights attending the recruiting office are wearing specially modified armor containing blood packs, again, used in training exercises, and the guards have been issued modified flechette rifles designed to fire at much reduced velocities (see the appropriate stat blocks).

De Montfort knows the Knights are working undercover, thanks to the PIO. His hasty "lock and load" statement was to prevent them uncovering his identity as a double agent.

Once they're tooled up for war, Vancelli gives them the identity of the target—the Preceptor Intelligence Officer. All being well, this won't come as a total shock to the Knights. If it does, then their reactions provide the crazed gang boss with a cheap thrill.

WHY THE PIO?

With the increased business from dealing Gateway, an ideal opportunity for the organization to expand its activities, Alexandria has

decided to do away with the chief of police. Rather than dirty her hands directly, the arrival of the Knights presents a perfect opportunity to have freelancers do the necessary.

The PIO is visiting the recruitment office to check over the files of potential new recruits. It's a routine action he undertakes before every intake is accepted into Squire or Sergeant training. Alexandria knows the time and place of his visit, as well as his security arrangements—one Lance of Knights—as it's the same drill every few months.

DEATH ON THE STREETS

Lay out the map on the tabletop and place some parked cars along the street. Let the heroes position themselves where and how they want. At exactly 1015 hours, an unmarked car pulls up outside the recruiting officer. The PIO, Preceptor Estate Manager, and a Lance of Knights disembark.

Although they've been tipped off to expect the attack, the Ordo forces don't know exactly when and from where it is coming. They must roll to avoid Surprise, but the Knights don't gain the Drop. It's possible the Knights may try to tip off their comrades anyway if they haven't guessed the ammunition they're using is pony.

Run the fight as normal. The bodyguards play their part well—they take up defensive positions and blast away at the heroes. Remember, these are well-trained soldiers under orders to make their defense look realistic, not cannon-fodder. They won't enter hand-to-hand combat unless a hero does. Even then, they pull their blows. Roll damage as normal, except no dice Ace.

The blood packs fitted to the PIO and his men explode when hit, resembling an actual wound. The PIO has briefed his team, and all act as if actually wounded. Since the SMG damage is nonlethal, their injuries are just bruises. Once the PIO is "down," the remaining Knights try to drag him into the safety of the recruitment office. De Montfort orders a fighting withdrawal at this point.

In the event the heroes begin losing the fight, then one of the other Knights loudly orders the men to use, "Defense plan Beta." This is a code for them to start faking injuries and falling over "dead" so as to allow the characters to "complete" their mission.

Preceptor Intelligence Officer: See page 96.

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Preceptor Estate Manager: Use the same stats as the PIO (page 96).

Knight Infantry (1 per hero): See page 96.

Umberto De Montfort: See page 94.

ACT 4: THE TOP RUNG REACHED

De Montfort remains silent on the return journey, shunning all attempts to discuss the ambush. Since he's alone with the heroes, they may decide to play a little rough in the hope of gaining useful information. A hardened soldier, de Montfort isn't going to crack easily.

Threatening to kill him doesn't cause him to flinch—he knows the operation he is involved with is bigger than him. De Montfort is also content that he has made his peace with God, and thus has nothing to fear from death. Torturing him would take many days and would still reveal nothing of use.

The Knights may suspect he is a fellow operative and try to get him to open up by revealing their true identities. It's a very risky decision because if they've got it wrong, de Montfort will know the gang has been infiltrated. This requires a Persuasion roll at -6—the undercover Knight isn't going to blow his cover without a very good excuse. With success, de Montfort says he believes the Knights are the good guys, and he'll help them in their goal any way he can, so long as it doesn't endanger his plans. On a raise, he reveals he is a Preacher Senior Knight but warns the characters that if he suspects they are endangering his cover, he won't hesitate to permanently remove them from the scene.

SCENE 1: BACK AT THE BASE

By the time the hit men return to the industrial site, Vatican Radio is already carrying word of the assassination. The television news channel has interrupted normal service to bring pictures and interviews with eyewitnesses from the murder scene.

Vancelli's mood is somber, though she is pleased with the Knights' work. She offers them permanent employment at the rate of 500 Meters a month, to be increased as they continue to show loyalty and dedication.

Here the GM has two choices. He can continue directly with the adventure as written, or he can keep up the undercover work by adding in some cameos of his own devising. The latter would lengthen the mission, but shouldn't affect the story. Missions could include delivery runs of Gateway, removing a rival gang in a vicious shootout, or even robbing a bank.

Vancelli orders the heroes to stay in the factory, since the streets will be crawling with Knights and Lictor Sergeants following the murder. She says she and de Montfort have an engagement tonight, but the heroes are on free time until tomorrow. Whether or not the Knights know about the meeting already, it's in their interests to attend—whoever Vancelli is meeting could be important to their case. Convincing her to take them along through die rolls requires a Persuasion check at -2. If the group wants to roleplay their arguments, then the GM should let them—they'll need to create a valid reason, of course. Should they fail, de Montfort puts in a word for them.

"Boss," de Montfort says, "I think we should take along the new blood. They did well today. The bit was very professional. A little extra firepower wouldn't go amiss, and it would show we're a serious organization with the means to expand and protect our operation."

Vancelli looks her aide straight in the eye for a few moments. "Yes," she muses, "it wouldn't hurt to show our muscle a little. They're talking of expansion, and displaying our muscle might convince them to give us a larger share. Get some rest. We'll meet up back here at 2100 hours."

Vancelli offers one Knight the chance to stay behind for some "recreational activity." It's up to the Knight whether he accepts and how, if at all, he lets down the boss without causing offense.

How the Knights pass the time is fairly irrelevant. They can check back with the Preceptory if they so wish. It may come as a surprise when the PIO, apparently in remarkable health, answers their call.

He doesn't go into any details, asking only if the deception worked. If they tip him off about the meeting, he reminds them to make sure they're dealing with the top man before they start killing criminals. Should anyone mention Vancelli, the PIO orders the Knights to bring her to justice if possible, but to terminate her if given no other choice.

SCENE 2: MEETING THE SUPPLIER

After another meal of bland rations, de Montfort takes the heroes to the armory. This time he returns their original weapons, though he's happy to let them have 12mm SMGs again if they'd prefer. Checking the ammunition reveals it is conventional 12mm rounds. Each hero can also take up to three grenades of his choice.

Once everyone is tooled up, they are loaded into a pair of SUVs. Vancelli and some goons take one, while de Montfort and the heroes are bundled into the other. The convoy heads across to the really rough end of town. Well-to-do neighbors give way to rundown apartments, and finally to the crowded and unhygienic slums. Eventually, the SUVs pull into an old warehouse.

Waiting for them are a group of rough-looking men armed with Corporate weapons. One, dressed in a smart suit, approaches the lead SUV and holds up his hand it to stop. Vancelli gets out, as do her goons. De Montfort signals the Knights to do the same, and to be on guard for a double-cross.

"Who are these people?" the man asks, waving his pistol at you. "New faces make me nervous, especially ones so well armed. Are you expecting to cause trouble?"

Alexandria sniffs casually, studies her nails for a few minutes, and then replies. "These people? Oh, these are just my new hired help. We're looking to expand our operation, and we want your boss to know we're serious. As for whether we're expecting trouble, we're always expecting trouble. That's how we manage to stay alive. Now, what about the increased shipments?"

"Calm down, calm down," the man croons. "The boss has agreed to triple your shipment size for tomorrow. Same rate, same deal—you get Gateway for free, you sell for 10 Meters a pop, you keep what you raise."

It shouldn't take the characters long to realize that something is wrong here. Giving away drugs is great if you're the dealer, as free samples of addictive drugs tempts those who might not otherwise dabble in narcotics, and creates a ready market for return sales once they're hooked, but the manufacturer handing out freebies in larger quantities and letting Vancelli keep every Miter means he's making no money.

Vancelli has pondered this herself, being no stranger to the dog-eat-dog world of suppliers. She figures the manufacturer is just creating a market, and once he has reached enough customers, the price will skyrocket to both her and the end users.

Unfortunately, Vancelli seems about to seal the deal and order the Knights to leave. This isn't good—the heroes are obviously close to the manufacturing site, as the other goons don't have any vehicles. Unless they act fast, they might lose the opportunity—manufacturers are prone to moving headquarters on a regular basis.

One way to try and get closer to the source is to play mind games with Vancelli. Doubts could be raised about the quality of the product, or whether the apparent selfless act of giving it away isn't hiding something else, such as a more profitable drug being sold for higher profits behind Vancelli's back. If the heroes don't start something like this, de Montfort will. He encourages the heroes to support his arguments by asking the Knights what they think.

Any sensible and logical argument should work—Vancelli wants to be somebody, and if she thinks she's getting held back or sidelined she demands to be reassured.

Vancelli turns to her contact. "The boys have a point, you know. I want to make sure we're partners in this venture all the way. Whatever you can supply we can sell, but I want to meet your boss. I want reassurances before we move to the next level. Can you arrange that?"

The man frowns, then whips out a communicator. He punches a button, pauses, and then speaks. "Sire? Yes, I'm with Vancelli now. She's keen to proceed, but she wants 'reassurances' we're on the level. She wants to see the production plant." A pause follows while the goon receives instructions.

"Yes, boss. Right away boss." He pockets the communicator. "The boss is expecting you. This way, please?"

THE SOURCE OF GATEWAY

Clyterravix is a greater Rephaim, and a smart one to boot. He's used to the underhanded politics of the Rephaim, but he knows next to nothing about humans and their seemingly endless reserves of treachery. As far as he is concerned, Vancelli is a minion, and therefore incapable of such an act. After all, no lesser Rephaim or human agent has ever turned on their masters. To that end, he neglects

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to deprive the characters of their weaponry (Rephaim grunts sport all manner of weapons in front of their lieges).

The group is lead through the warehouse, down several flights of stairs, and through steam tunnels before entering a large chamber. Inside are racks of chemical equipment and unusual machines. Atop one machine is a large, glass tank. The milky, bubbling fluid hides something bobbing up and down inside. At the far end is a huge metal door, which creaks open slightly, shortly after the characters enter.

Stepping through is a tall figure, swathed head to toe in dark, voluminous robes. The figure shuffles awkwardly toward Vancelli, stopping several feet away.

"Greeting, Vancelli," the figure says in a deep, unsettling voice. "I am Uriel, sole manufacturer of the drug you call Gateway. Welcome," it says, sweeping its cloaked arm outward, "to my lair."

Uriel then proceeds to give a guided tour of the facility. While the cloaked figure seems quite relaxed, his guards keep a vigilant watch. Any character who wants to inspect the machinery must make a Stealth roll to be surreptitious. On a failure, he finds his gaze blocked by a burly soldier.

Combat Engineers are the most technically inclined of the various Knight branches, but even they rarely dabble in chemistry. A Common Knowledge roll at -4, -2 for Combat Engineers, is required to deduce the machinery is fairly standard, and is used for filtering, distilling, and purifying chemical compounds. The only really interesting item is the tank of milky fluid.

A hero who manages to get close can make a Notice roll at -2. Should the roll fail, he may try again next round, but only after passing another Stealth roll first. With success, he realizes the mysterious object floating around is a human brain! Have the Knight make a Guts roll to contain his surprise. With failure, he lets out a cry, instantly alerting Clyterravix to his discovery.

Clyterravix let's out a low chuckle at the Knight's displeasure. Vancelli, however, demands to know what the hero saw. Once told, she says:

"What sort of sick creature are you? Only the..." She reaches out a hand, and grabs Uriel's hood. With a sharp tug, she pulls it down to reveal...a withered, bandaged corpse—a greater mummy.

She staggers back, her hand clutched to her mouth. "Dear God," she chokes, "you're Repbaim!"

Uriel's laugh grows in intensity. "You honestly thought you were dealing with a human? What human mind could conceive of Gateway? And what does my origin matter, human? You are growing rich from my labors, and I ask for nothing but loyalty in return.

"Gateway is a natural drug," the creature hisses. "The key ingredient is the synaptic fluid of this brain, which we call the Source. A fitting title, yes? He would have been burnt by your Inquisition, but we took pity on him. We wished to share his gift with your race. Through his sacrifice, thousands of humans will develop psionic abilities, and when they do, the walls of reality will weaken. Upuaut, the Opener of the Ways has shown us the key to unlock He Who Abides in Darkness! Through your continued servitude, willingly or otherwise, we shall secure total victory over humanity!"

Vancelli fumbles for her pistol, but the mummy is too quick. He backhands her, sending the woman tumbling to the floor. "Insolent witch!" he hisses through blackened teeth. "How dare a minion of the Repbaim dare draw a weapon in anger against its master! You are lucky I am..."

Boom! The sound of a heavy pistol rends the air. The mummy staggers, its head jerking back from the impact, though it appears unbarmed. De Montfort lunges forward, smoking gun in hand, and grabs the boss by the wrist. As he drags her away, he shouts out. "We're criminals, not heretics, baby! Open fire! Open fire!"

SCENE 3: THE BIG FIGHT

The drug manufacturing plant is 24" to a side. Long tables and machines should be placed to break up the battlefield and provide cover. The brain-in-the-jar is in the dead center of the room.

The Knights should be placed in the lower half of the chamber, no closer than 2" to the jar. Vancelli, de Montfort, and Vancelli's cronies start further back. Clyterravix begins 3" from the hero nearest the jar. Half his minions should be within 3" of him, while the rest are no closer than 8" to a hero and in the northern half of the chamber.

Deal action cards! Divide the cultists into two groups for action card purposes.

Warning: At its height, this battle could involve *five* distinct groups of antagonists—the Knights, Vancelli and her goons, Clyterravix and his cultists, the Source, and the Inquisition (see below).

The GM controls only Clyterravix, his minions, and Vancelli to begin with. At the start of the rounds indicated below, more forces join the fray. The Source is really a nonentity in the fight as far as controlling him is concerned—he fires off random powers in random directions and does nothing else.

Hand out Ally Sheets for de Montfort and the hardened criminals to the players. Vancelli remains an NPC under the GM's control. This time you should use de Montfort's full stats. The criminals fight alongside the heroes until the Knights decide to finish them off or join the Inquisition, at which point the goons revert to GM control. De Montfort is controlled by a player until the fight ends.

The fight ends when either the bad guys win (meaning the Knights have failed) or the good guys claim victory (meaning Vancelli, Clyterravix, the Source, and all the minions are dead).

ROUND 2

A stray shot (someone will miss their target) thuds into delicate machinery, producing a shower of sparks. Damage to the console has destroyed the drugs repressing the Source's psionic powers, and he's now able to use his arsenal.

The Source may be physically incapable of action, but his brain has remained active during the painful extraction process, and it's driven him insane.

Deal the Source an action card each round as normal, including this one. His only action is to use his Psionics. In his deranged state, he activates a random power each round. Compare the card value to the table below to see which power he activates.

Card	Power
Deuce	<i>Bolt</i> (1 bolt for 2d6 damage; 1 PP)
3	<i>Bolt</i> (1 bolt for 3d6 damage; 2 PP)
4	<i>Bolt</i> (2 bolts for 2d6 damage; 2 PP)

5	<i>Bolt</i> (3 bolts for 2d6 damage; 3 PP)
6	<i>Bolt</i> (2 bolts for 3d6 damage; 4 PP)
7	<i>Bolt</i> (3 bolts for 3d6 damage; 6 PP)
8–10	<i>Burst</i>
Jack	<i>Entangle</i> (one target)
Queen	<i>Entangle</i> (Medium Burst Template)
King	<i>Fear</i>
Ace	<i>Stun</i>
Joker	Previous power used, but with the Joker bonuses

The Source has no insight into where his foes are, so he fires off powers in random directions. Roll a d12 and read it as a clockface.

Targeted spells like *bolt*, *telekinesis*, and the single victim version of *entangle* are aimed at the closest foe along the line. If none are present, then the spell has no effect, though it still drains Power Points. For *burst*, place the template touching the source and rotate it in the appropriate direction. Victims beneath the template are affected as normal. Place the center of the template for area effect powers (*entangle* with a template, *fear*, and *stun*) 1d10+4" in the indicated direction and determine results as normal.

Should he run out of Power Points, he switches to Soul Drain. He keeps using his powers until he is killed or passes out from the strain.

Note that the source is a Wild Card and thus has bennies. Don't use his bennies to reroll failed Psionics rolls—use them to Soak damage.

ROUND 4

The Inquisition arrives on the scene! The CIS, during a routine internal investigation, stumbled across the liche's agents. They endured torture just long enough to reveal the Source has not been executed, but rather had been smuggled to safety. They have spent the last few months following the trail (and leaving behind many smoking corpses).

Unusually, they chose to contact the Preceptor and actually ask permission to enter the estate. This was no act of goodwill. Once the Preceptor Master knew they were seeking a very dangerous heretic, his hands were

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bound—had he refused, the CIS could have labeled him a heretic for thwarting their investigation. Thus, the CIS has effectively forced him to accept their jurisdiction in the matter. It's petty politics, but it's how things work on Salus.

A small strike team has located the facility and decides to strike quickly and without mercy. As far as they are concerned, everyone inside is a heretic. As such, they attack the nearest targets.

A hero trying to convince them he is on their side must make a Persuasion roll at -4 as an action. It's up to the hero whether he names his comrades and de Montfort as well. Once convinced, they change their attention to the Source, the criminals, and the Rephaim. With failure, the Knights are likely going to have to kill a few Inquisitors in order to save their own skins.

Switch the Ally Sheets for the Inquisitor-Captain and his Inquisitors. Vancelli and her soldiers are now the heroes' enemies, but they're still against the Rephaim!

Once the Knights and Inquisitors team up, Vancelli, if still alive, tries to escape in the confusion. It doesn't matter to the plot whether she succeeds or not, but she should try. If successful, she can return later as a villain in another police duty adventure.

Clytterravix: See page 96.

Cultists (2 per hero): See page 95.

Alexandria Vancelli: See page 96.

Umberto de Montfort: See page 94.

Hardened Criminals (1 per hero): See page 95.

The Source: See page 97.

Inquisitor Captain (1 per hero): See page 97.

Inquisitors (1 per hero): See page 97.

SCENE 4: AFTERMATH

The ideal ending is for Vancelli's gang and the Rephaim to be defeated, and the Source killed. Whether the criminals are captured or slain matters little. The Inquisitors, assuming any survive the mayhem, try to claim the public relations victory, brazenly claiming *they* defeated a Rephaim operation in the Preceptory's estates. This could lead to some interesting tension between the Knights and any Inquisitors they meet on future missions.

De Montfort has achieved his mission, and can now return to active service. He informs the Knights about his work and how he arranged for the PIO to know about the assassination attempt, bids the Knights farewell, and makes arrangements to return to his own Preceptory. At the GM's discretion, he could return in another adventure.

The PIO congratulates the Knights on a successful mission.

Should the Knights and their allies lose the final fight, there are three possible outcomes. If the battle hasn't produced a clear winner, then assume Clytterravix and his minions win (they're the most powerful faction).

First, Clytterravix survives. The Source is now too powerful and uncontrollable, so he is eliminated. The experiment has proven to the Rephaim that psions have a purpose in the war. You can rest assured that further experimentation will continue.

Second, Vancelli and her gang are the sole survivors. They gather what supplies of Gateway they can find, sell them, and then move to a new city to continue their criminal ways. Vancelli, once she learns of the PIO's miraculous recovery, could become a recurring villain.

Finally, the Source is the only survivor. He won't last long, though—he just keeps firing off his psionic powers until the Soul Drain eventually kills him.

UPDATE: POLICING

The details on law enforcement in *Necropolis 2350* cover dioceses and archdioceses, but not Preceptories. In accordance with their being immune to standard Church law, the Ordines have managed to extend certain rights to the citizens who serve them. In this particular instance, that's the right to be policed by the local Preceptory, not the regular Curia-backed police, and be judged not in the Bishop's Court but by a council of Knights.

Naturally, the Curia has complained bitterly that bishops should retain authority over all citizens, regardless of where they live. However, the Knights also have the right to ship any criminal to the Bishop's Court for trial.

Most petty cases are handed over to the bishops, if only because it creates less administrative work for the Ordines and promotes good will. Major cases are generally heard in the Preceptory, as it's an excuse for the Knights to prove their loyalty to the Church and to gain some PR with the general populace (who often

fear a trial by Knights means an immediate guilty verdict because of the Ordines' strict vows).

There's also the matter of one-upmanship. On more than one occasion in the past, Knights have caught a dangerous criminal and handed him over for trial to the Bishop's Court, only to have their role in his capture be heavily played down in the media.

STRUCTURE

The senior law enforcement officer in any Preceptory is the Preceptor Intelligence Officer, a senior Knight whose position

accords him the same respect, but not actual rank, as a Knight Commander. Although he is outranked by the Preceptor Master, the Preceptor Master rarely, if ever, gets involved in his subordinate's work.

His duties include considerably more than just policing the Preceptory estates, so except in the smallest Preceptory he appoints a deputy. The deputy, a Sergeant Commander, runs the day-to-day policing. He holds the title *Lictor Primus* while in office. In modern terms, he's effectively the chief of police.



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Depending on the size of the settlements in the estate, he may be aided by a number of *Lictor Secundi*, the equivalent of precinct captains. A town generally has one Lictor Secundus for every 20,000 souls.

The police on the street are Sergeants. Smaller Preceptories rotate Sergeants from the combat-ready stock, whereas larger ones have a permanent force of Sergeants purely for policing civilians. These carry the title *Lictor Sergeant*. Although they still retain 10-man Lances, these are divided into five pairs. Lictor Sergeants are armed as regular Sergeants, but also carry batons, stunners, and, in riot duties, shields.

Knights sent on policing duties fill an awkward position. Although they are expected to show due respect to the Lictor Primus and Secundi, their title means they are actually only directly answerable to the Preceptor Intelligence Officer, a fellow Knight. In most cases the PIO waives this responsibility to the Lictor Primus, meaning the Knights actually serve under a Sergeant, albeit an experienced one.

The typical roles Knights fulfill are that of special investigators and tactical strike teams. Being of sterner moral fiber, they are also called in to handle cases involving heresies, something to which the Inquisition vociferously objects.

Every Preceptory's police force is served by at least one representative from the Office of the Bishop's Attorney. They are on hand to ensure suspects have access to legal representation, and to make sure the Ordines follow the letter and spirit of the law when dealing with criminals, and to try and secure a trial in the Bishop's Court. Since they serve the Curia, legal representatives are viewed as potential spies and troublemakers by default.

Administrative duties are handled by civilians from the local estate, thus providing citizens with honest jobs. All citizens serving in this manner are carefully vetted. Any criminal record prohibits a citizen from serving with the police.

because of his devoutly religious parents, or maybe from some deep-seated desire to atone for his sinful ways, Garantia always believes he is divinely appointed to cleanse the Rephaim. Unfortunately, everyone he meets while high is considered a Rephaim.

Entries marked "*" are for the combat encounter only. If Garantia is taken alive, he loses these abilities after the drug wears off.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d6, Psionics d10*, Shooting d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Delusional (Major; sees Rephaim everywhere)*, Habit (Major; Gateway)

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics)*, Combat Reflexes*, Dodge, Mentalist*, Quick Draw

Gear: Molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), 6mm pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, Shots 15, Semi-auto, AP 2)

Powers: *Burst, deflection, fear* (30 Power Points)

LOW LEVEL CRIMINAL

Street punks, thugs, and low end drug pushers all use these stats. WMs who want slightly tougher thugs should increase Strength and Agility to d8, and add Combat Reflexes.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Mean

Edges: —

Gear: 6mm pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, Shots 15, Semi-auto, AP 2), 2 mags, molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2)



UMBERTO DE MONTFORT

Umberto de Montfort began his military career with Asgard, graduating the prestigious Valhalla Military Academy with honor. He served for six years and reached the rank of captain before he found faith and switched sides, signing up as a member of the Preachers. For four years he put his command experience to good use training militia units in rural areas.

He has spent the last two years as an undercover operative. Although his Preceptory is in another part of Salus, his work has led him to the heroes' home turf. He has registered his

THE CAST



EDUARDO GARANTIA

Eduardo Garantia is a street punk with a history of minor convictions and an addiction to Gateway. Like all Gateway users, he suffers from delusions when on the drug. Perhaps

presence with the local Preceptor Intelligence Officer, but has little to do with the local authorities.

De Montfort has two sets of near-identical stats. The first stat block should be given to the players during the car park fight. Do **not** let them see the second set until indicated in the text. This is very important.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Quirk (keeps saying "baby")

Edges: Assault, Combat Reflexes, Command, Command Presence, Dodge, Gossip Network, Hold the Line, Inspire, Rock and Roll, Tactician, Valhalla Graduate (+3")

Gear: Light armor breastplate (+4, torso only), 12mm SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, Shots 30, AP 2), 2 mags, 2 x monofilament grenades (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, MBT), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2)

FULL STATS

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8, Throwing d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Quirk (keeps saying "baby"), Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Assault, Combat Reflexes, Command, Command Presence, Dodge, Hold the Line, Inspire, Rank (Senior Knight), Rock and Roll, Tactician, Valhalla Graduate (+3")

Special Training: Hearts & Minds, Training Cadre

Gear: Light armor breastplate (+4, torso only), 12mm SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, Shots 30, AP 2), 2 mags, 2 x monofilament grenades (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, MBT), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2)

HARDENED CRIMINAL

These hoods are on the next rung up the ladder from the street pushers. They're well-armed and armored, and prone to using excessive force. All their gear is of Union manufacture.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Rock and Roll

Gear: Light armor breastplate (+4, torso only), 12mm SMG (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, Shots 30, AP 2), 2 mags, 2 x monofilament grenades (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, MBT), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2)



CORRUPT PRIEST

These damned souls are priests who have sold their souls to the Dark in exchange for arcane power. They seek to lead others down the path of damnation.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Faith d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Rephaim) d6, Stealth d6

Hindrances: Delusional (Major; Immortalist heretic), Loyal (to any Rephaim)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Improved Dodge, Level Headed

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Rune dagger (Str+d6+2, AP 2)

Powers: *Blast* (ball of hellfire), *bolt* (ray of black light), *obscure* (darkness); 30 Power Points

CULTIST

Cultist is a generic term used to describe any heretic.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Rephaim) d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Edges & Hindrances: —

Gear: Asgard 6mm SMG with 2 magazines (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, Auto, 3RB, AP 2), 2 x monofilament grenades (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, MBT), and a molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2)

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ALEXANDRIA VANCELLI, "THE BOSS"

Alexandria is the daughter of a (now-deceased) Knight Templar. Born before her father enlisted, she was just six years old when he found his faith. With her mother dead, Alexandria's father sent her to an orphanage. There, she grew to hate her father and the Sacri Ordines.

Her drift into crime was an easy one. Few children who pass through the orphanages ever get a break once they leave, and crime is the only recourse open to most. Alexandria began as a pickpocket but quickly moved into selling drugs. By the age of 21, she was running her own gang. When she was contacted by the Rephaim, through human agents, and invited to sell Gateway, she leapt at the chance to boost her operation's turnover.

Although she is willing to commit all manner of crimes, she has no love for the Rephaim. After all, if they weren't around, her father wouldn't have left her. Crime is one thing, but heresy is something altogether worse.

Publicly, Vancelli plays at being a dominatrix-type figure. In truth, it's just an act—men seem to expect that sort of thing from a woman in power (at least in her eyes), so she doesn't disappoint. Naturally, when her true nature comes out, it often leaves her enemies slightly confounded.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d6, Streetwise d10, Taunt d8

Charisma: -2 (-6); **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Cautious, Ugly (scar)

Edges: Connections (Criminal gangs), Frenzy, Improved Dodge, Level Headed, Marksman, Quick Draw, Strong Willed

Gear: Ravendell laser pistol (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 1-3d6, ROF 1; Shots 24, Semi-auto), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2)

PRECEPTOR INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Investigation d10, Notice d8, Persuasion d10, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d10

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (6)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Charismatic, Dodge, Investigator

Gear: Medium armor (+6), modified flechette pistol with 3 mags (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6-1, Shots 30, Auto), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4), ID tag.

KNIGHT INFANTRYMAN

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (6)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge

Gear: Medium armor (+6), modified flechette rifle with 3 mags (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d6, Auto, 3RB), 5 baton grenades in GL (Range: 20/40/80, Damage: 2d6, nonlethal), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4), medpac, ID tag



CLYTERRAVIX

Clyterravix is a priest serving the Fane Abnormis, an unorthodox sect whose methods are seen by traditionalists as opposing the will of the Dark. Since the Dark hasn't ordered them destroyed, the other priests have yet to act beyond political sniping. Clyterravix sees his appointment to the Gateway operation as a major opportunity for his Fane to grab glory and recognition.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d12, Intimidation d10, Necromancy d10, Notice d8, Weird Science d10

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 15 (5)

Gear: Stygian armor (+5), rune sword (Str+d8+4, AP 4)

Gizmos: Pituitary bracelet, vocal cords

Special Abilities:

* **Arcane Background (Magic):** A mummy typically knows *barrier*, *bolt*, *deflection*, *fear*, *obscure*, and *zombie* (35 Power Points).

* **Crushing Grasp:** Str+d6. On a raise, the mummy automatically grapples its opponent.

* **Fear (-2):** Opponents must make a Guts roll at -2.

* **Greater Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional

damage from called shots. Half-damage from piercing weapons. Ignores Wound Penalties.

- * **Improved Arcane Resistance:** +4 Armor versus magic, and +4 to rolls made to resist magic effects.
- * **Mummy Rot:** Anyone touched by a mummy, whether he is damaged or not, must make a Vigor roll. Failure means the character has “mummy rot” and suffers an immediate wound. Victims who die as result of “mummy rot” may be brought back as guardian mummies.
- * **Shuffling Gait:** Mummies roll a d4 running die.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.
- * **Weakness (Fire):** Mummies take +4 damage from fire.



THE SOURCE

Had the Source been born thousands of years ago, he might have ruled as a living god. A thousand years ago and he would have been branded a witch, just like he was by the Inquisition on Salus. Captured and kept drugged to prevent him using his awesome natural talents, the Source (real name Algernon Satamoto) was awaiting execution when he was spirited away to unwillingly serve the Rephaim.

Now he is an ingredient in a scientific process, his brain separated from his body and kept functioning through necromantic technology. The Rephaim knew the brain was still alive, but such thoughts do not trouble them—a human is lower to them than an ant is to a human.

The Source’s mind was kept sedated to negate its psionics, yet was still active enough to understand its fate. Totally insane and beyond redemption, the Source is no longer an ingredient—it’s an uncontrollable weapon.

Attributes: Agility —, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength —, Vigor d8

Skills: Psionics d12+2

Pace: —; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 11 (7)

Hindrances: —

Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Great Luck, Master (Psionics), Mentalist, Soul Drain

Powers: *Bolt, burst, entangle, fear, stun* (40 Power Points)

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +5:** Encased in an armored jar.
- * **Size -2:** It’s a brain in a jar.
- * **Small:** Attackers are -2 to attack rolls due

to the brain’s size.

INQUISITOR-CAPTAIN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d10, Guts d12, Intimidation d10, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Improved Frenzy

Gear: Light armor (+4), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2), flechette pistol with 3 mags (12/24/48, 2d6, Shots 30, AP 2, Semi-auto)

INQUISITOR

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: —

Gear: Light armor (+4), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2), flechette pistol with 3 magazines (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, AP 2, Semi-auto), one flamethrower per 4 Inquisitors (Range: Cone, Damage: 2d10, ignores armor)

PLAYER HANDOUT #1: TACTICAL BRIEFING

Date: 19.I.2051; 0800 Zulu.

Good morning. Glad to see you've taken the criminal role to heart. Those beards really suit you! Intelligence picked up suspected heretical activity last night, and since it might be linked to your ongoing investigation, you've drawn the short straw to investigate the situation. After life on the frontline, this should be a cakewalk for you.

At 0634 this morning, a surveillance camera picked up a minor disturbance outside the Straw Man Club. That by itself isn't unusual—we're always busting up fights outside the joint. However, one of the combatants was caught on camera turning invisible. We've no idea who he is, so it's just possible he could be an unregistered Faithful, but given what occurred next, the odds are he's a rogue psion or heretic.

Anyway, the camera image is grainy—you'll get a chance to review it after this briefing—but the victim is clearly being viciously assaulted by some unseen force. It doesn't take a genius to work out our heretic is also a brutal killer. The corpse is down in the morgue if you want to examine it.

Check over the surveillance footage and use whatever resources you require to locate that heretic. Then pay him a visit and remind him of Church law. We don't want to blow your undercover work, but we're short of manpower. You'll be going in wearing standard Church issue gear. Make sure you keep your helmets on!

Just be careful! He likely lives in an apartment building, so keep weapon and grenade use to an absolute minimum, to avoid unnecessary civilian casualties.

Enemy Forces: We're not sure exactly what you're facing on this one. At best, it's a lone heretic who needs reeducation. If that's the case, we want him alive. At worst, he's part of a large, active cell of heretics with access to ungodly powers and illegal weapons. Should that be the truth, you have official sanction to cleanse the nest with whatever force you feel is appropriate.

Support: Right now this is a routine bust. If the situation warrants support, a Lance of Sergeants is on standby. A Peacemaker RCV is fuelled up and ready to transport you around the town as needed. We're short of drivers right now, so one of you better be able to produce a Class II or better license (Driving d6+). If you can't, you'll be walking.

Equipment: Standard patrol gear for this one. Leave all your extraneous equipment in stores. I can't see you needing rations or canteens on this mission. Since there's a chance the killer might be useful alive, take a stunner as well.

PLAYER HANDOUT #2: VIDEO IMAGE

The footage is grainy, as the briefing officer said. However, it clearly shows two men emerging from the Straw Man's main entrance. One is tall with dark hair and a beard (the victim), while the other (the killer) is shorter, but also with dark hair. The first few minutes involve brief scuffling. The tall man is clearly trying to drag the shorter man away from the club, but without success.

The killer then swings a fist, knocking the victim to the floor. While the victim is regaining his feet, the other seems to be fiddling with his jacket, but the raw image is indistinct. The shorter man suddenly clutches his head and doubles over. The other rushes over to him, but is quickly pushed back.

The shorter man rises to his full height, his face contorted in what looks like ecstasy.

He points at the tall man and hisses something, but the audio track is too poor quality to understand. Without warning, he just vanishes from sight, as if he had never existed.

The tall man staggers back, obviously confused and shocked at what he has just witnessed. He seems to be calling out, turning on his heels to locate the other person.

He steps back, his hand rising to his shoulder, where a blood patch can be seen.

He begins flailing his arms and contorting, reacting to stab wounds, no doubt. The attack continues for several minutes before he finally falls to the ground, motionless.

A few minutes pass before other patrons from the club step into the street. On noticing the corpse, they react as one would expect from civilians—a mixture of fear and curiosity. One of them checks the victim's neck and wrists, but shakes his head a few moments later. Another makes a vidphone call from a nearby booth. A few minutes later, a Peacemaker turns up, and the situation is quickly brought under control by your colleagues.



ECHOES

WAR MASTER'S NOTES

Welcome to *Echoes*, a standalone scenario written for the *Necropolis 2350* campaign setting.

If you intend to play in this adventure, you should **stop reading now**. Advanced knowledge of the scenario will only spoil your enjoyment of the game.

The WM should read the entire adventure before play begins. Knowing the basic flow and details in advance will greatly speed up play and make the game run smoother.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

You need a copy of the *Savage Worlds* rulebook, the *Necropolis 2350* Savage Setting, and the *2351-55 Update* to run this adventure. *Necropolis* Figure Flats are recommended, though any suitable sci-fi or dark future miniatures will suffice. The adventure *Opener of the Ways* contains useful background information on the Sacri Ordines and their role as Lictor officers, as well as information about how policing works within a Preceptory's estates.

CHARACTERS

This adventure is designed for a Lance of four Knights of any character Rank from any of the Sacri Ordines. Use the archetypes from the *Necropolis 2350* setting book if you need pre-generated characters. Each archetype has been designed as a starting character.

QUESTIONING NPCs

There are several lines of investigation open to the Knights. Every relevant NPC the heroes may interact with has notes regarding information they can pass to the heroes. It is important to note that the NPCs are largely reactive—they respond to certain lines of questioning rather than just blurt out information. Furthermore, some information an NPC knows can only be accessed after other clues have been found.

For example, the local Lictor Primus knows of Pete Moulton by name, but he has not yet linked him to the case. Unless the Knights bring up Moulton's name, the police chief does not reveal any facts.

PLOT OVERVIEW

Knights are not just combat troops—they also serve as law-enforcement officers within the Preceptory estates. While this duty commonly falls to Sergeants known as Lictor Sergeants (or just Lictors), there are times when the services of the Knights are required. Set entirely in a city or large town within the Preceptory's boundaries, this adventure is primarily an investigative mission.

Six months before the start of the adventure, a team of archaeologists from the local museum embarked on a dig in southern Nova Europa, searching for evidence of mankind's earliest colonies on Salus. Although the mission failed to uncover a cache of treasure, it did discover an artifact of apparent non-human manufacture. This was returned to the local museum for study and display.

The actual mission begins, as far as the plot is concerned, one week before the main events take place. A local news story carries an interview with the archaeologist who led the team that located the artifact and gives the Knights their first glimpse of it. One week later, a related news broadcast carries a story on the theft of the artifact and the murder of a museum employee. The Knights become directly involved at this point.

The investigation into the theft and murder takes the Knights on a hunt for the killer, a man who is no longer entirely in control of his mind. The artifact, actually a Zal device buried eons ago, flooded the thief's mind with images. Effectively corrupted, the thief has become a Dark Prophet, convinced that the Rephaim are mankind's saviors and will soon make him a god and punish humanity for its collective sins.

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Initial investigations demonstrate to the Knights that the killer is no ordinary man—writing found on the museum in the victim's blood shows the killer has a knowledge of Cryptspeak, a talent very few humans possess, and was willing to commit appalling acts of violence. The local Lictor Sergeants are convinced they are looking for a heretical psychopath.

Following the leads brings the Lance into close contact with Doctor Andersen, the team leader, and her young daughter, Paige. Aside from giving the Knights information about the artifact, Andersen is also a victim—destined to be attacked by the killer, but not badly hurt. Her daughter, Paige, also tries to seduce one of the Knights, causing friction between the doctor and the team, but providing some good role-playing opportunities.

Further investigation leads the Knights into an armed confrontation with what appears to be security staff from Asgard's embassy to the Vatican. These are in fact Lazarite agents working on Project Revelation (see below). Another lead takes the Knights to a local antique shop, whose owner has been paid to produce a copy of the artifact. This again is part of Project Revelation.

The Knights should begin to understand that the artifact is more important than they first realized and that capturing it before the other group is of paramount importance. Unfortunately, events conspire against them and the Knights end the adventure with only half of the artifact in their possession.

The Knights themselves may not actually end the final battle against the Dark Prophet. Holding a hostage on a church roof, the prophet (who is destined to die there) may be killed by one of the Lazarites seeking the artifact, or the Knights themselves, depending on how events conspire.

PROJECT REVELATION

Officially, the Third Reformation Church actively denies the possibility of alien life. Those who espouse such ideas publicly are not branded heretics, but, if their position is one of public trust, are ridiculed through media channels. Unofficially, the Church is open to the idea of aliens. However, given the religious upheaval the discovery of Salus caused, the Church has no desire to suffer a similar fate should evidence be uncovered.

In order to conceal any information relating to possible alien life, the Lazarites and CIS formed Project Revelation. An ultra top-secret project, Revelation exists to suppress knowledge of alien artifacts. Until recently, they have had little to do

except crush theories put out by scientists on the odds of aliens existing. They are not subtle—any indiscretion committed by an outspoken scientist quickly becomes public knowledge, and if no indiscretion exists, they happily invent one, complete with documented “evidence.”

News of the existence of the golden artifact came to their attention through an informant. Rapidly spurred into swift action, the team concocted a plan to acquire the artifact. Using a false name designed to incriminate Asgard, if their plans went awry, they began covertly questioning the museum curator. Next, they set up a plan to have a fake artifact created, which they were planning to substitute for the original. Unfortunately, the murder and theft has completely ruined their plans. In true Lazarite form, they are now prepared to use whatever force is necessary to acquire the relic.

THE HISTORY OF THE FIELD TRIP

Just over six months ago, the local museum sent a field team of eight archaeologists to search for a “lost” colony constructed during the first wave of colonization. Although the team did not expect to find the ruins during their first season, they did hope to make headway, enabling future expeditions to carry on from their work.

The team set up its base camp near the border with the Alvam Pocket, convinced by evidence found by Doctor Alexandria Andersen, the team leader, that the ruins they sought lay in the scrubland to the east. The first few months of the season were spent with one-half of the team searching the region for clues and the other half going over old records in the hope of finding further evidence pointing to the location of the colony. In the first week of the fifth month of searching, the team excavated an area and found a small structure, possibly a house.

The team had not expected to uncover a treasure trove, but was disappointed to discover the structure held little of value besides a few pieces of household cutlery and some old Earth coins. Ironically, the colonist site the team sought was quickly abandoned in favor of a natural cave system not many miles away. With no interesting finds in the colony, the team switched to hunting for fossils of Salus' ancient life forms. And deep inside the cave, in strata dated to around 70 million years old, the team discovered a strange golden object.

The team was naturally excited, for the artifact was of unknown design and obviously extremely valuable. Church law is notoriously

vague when it comes to alien artifacts, primarily because the Church has no belief in aliens. As an independent museum, the archaeologists furthermore had no legal requirement to inform the Department on Antiquities.

The plan was to finish excavating the site and then return home, taking their treasure with them. Over the next week, three of the diggers were killed by scorpions and one of the team was killed by a snake while organizing supplies. Doctor Andersen pulled the plug on the operation and the team returned home early.

The newspapers, both locally and abroad, reported the deaths. Few outside of the scientific community saw much about the expedition in the media, and even fewer know of the deaths.

THE ARTIFACT

The statue is actually a Zal data storage device, a leftover from the ancient days when the Zal briefly inhabited Salus. Contained within its memory banks were Zal propaganda images. When connected to a powerful energy source, the device allowed the technologically superior aliens to broadcast the images contained in its memory directly into the minds of races they wished to conquer. The images showed the Zal fleet arriving in orbit over several worlds and bombing them into submission. These were intended to weaken enemy resistance by showing the futility of defying the Zal.

Pete Moulton, a thief, drug addict, and latent psychic, accidentally activated the artifact through his own innate psychic powers when he tried to steal it from the museum. In so doing, the visions flooded his mind. Unable to comprehend the images contained within, he went insane, his mind concocting its own story to fit the scenes of destruction. Moulton became a dark prophet. Having known only war since his youth, Moulton's brain automatically equated the Zal with the Rephaim. In this, he has taken a dramatic leap toward a truth unknown to the rest of humanity. Confused and insane, he believes the Rephaim are gods, coming in force "from the heavens" to take over the world. He has been singled out as their chosen spokesman, to be elevated to godhood when they finally arrive.

THE MUSEUM

The local museum is funded by private investors and the local Preceptory, and maintains small collections on Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Central and Native American

artifacts. The Department of Antiquities has frequently tried to gain control of the museum, but its presence on Preceptory lands has thwarted each attempt.

Although nowhere near as large as the Smithsonian, the museum does boast some impressive works of art, mainly supplied through the private investors whose families transported the artifacts to Salus. Local archaeological teams have discovered dozens of items dating back to mankind's first exploration of Salus.

The museum is situated in the northern suburbs of the city, opposite a Preceptory Estate office. It is open from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm and then again from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm daily. Admission costs 5 Miters and is purchased either from the booth at the museum entrance or through one of the tourist information bureaus dotted throughout the city. The director of the museum is Doctor Ernest Watkinson. He can generally be found in his office during business hours.

Security within the museum is quite high and consists of a dozen private security guards who pay close attention to the artifacts they are watching. Cameras and a number of infrared alarms are also used to maintain security. All of the cases are wired to sound an alarm if they are lifted or the glass is broken.

Aside from housing the artifacts from the dig, the museum itself has very little to do with the mission. The staff can be questioned over events that take place there, but the Knights should only need to spend a token amount of time investigating the museum itself.

HOOKS

The Knights are introduced to the mission and gather background material. The WM should copy relevant player handouts and distribute them at this time. Some of the handouts are only available if the Knights actively request further information from the various Preceptory databases.

THE POWER OF THE MEDIA

The mission begins, whether the Knights realize it or not, with the broadcast on the Church news channel of a local event. This event should take place at least a week before the Knights actually begin investigating the murder and the strange symbols.

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The news starts with one of the presenters standing on the steps on the local Museum of Antiquities. A small number of the general public stand beside him, queuing at the doors that, unusually for this time of day, are shut. A few seconds pass before the presenter begins speaking.

"Good afternoon viewers, I'm Clint Parker and this is the latest news, live from the [insert Preceptory name] Museum of Antiquities. As some of you may be aware, the Museum is today revealing a series of artifacts discovered by Doctor Alexandra Andersen. Doctor Andersen has spent the last six months excavating a previously unknown lost colony settlement in the jungle. We hope to be talking to her later on in the program."

"We can confirm that artifacts are being housed in the new Weisman Wing, which was built specifically to house new finds and was recently opened by Mr. George Weisman himself."

The doors behind the presenter open and the public begin to filter in. The presenter casts a quick look behind him and then returns to face the camera.

"It looks like we'll be able to go inside soon and talk to Doctor Andersen about her work. The artifacts are naturally under heavy guard, while a team of experts debates their value, culturally, scientifically and financially. Yes, the small queue, who are not here to visit the artifacts by the way, is clearing so we'll go inside now."

With that, the presenter and cameraman go inside, pass through the lobby, down a long corridor filled with display cases, and through a door marked "Weisman Wing," which is flanked by two armed security guards. Inside, the main lights are turned down low. Small spotlights in the ceiling highlight several display cases. A single unlit case stands in the centre of the room, too sparsely illuminated for its contents to be seen.

The camera zooms in on a few of the displays, revealing a golden item of unknown purpose and a few pieces of broken pottery. A small group of figures (including a striking woman in a black business suit) stands at the far side of the room discussing the gold-colored artifact, which rests in a nearby case. In the background, a pretty teenage girl can be seen lurking around the display cases. The presenter approaches the main group and the camera pans to include the woman and the presenter in frame.

"Doctor Andersen? Hi, I'm Clint Parker. I understand that you're busy, but I wondered if I might have a quick word? Can you tell us the significance of these finds?"

The woman turns to face the camera, smiles briefly, and begins talking.

"Well... Clint was it? The site was discovered in an area of Salus that is not associated with any of the main colonist landings of Salus' early history. My team hasn't yet come up with any definite proof of who built the structure but it is definitely old. It might date to one of the very first colonies. Little in the way of visible dating evidence survives, especially in the way of writing or technology. I'm hoping to go back next season and continue my work."

"What about the object in that case?" Clint asks, pointing to the darkened display case. "Is it true it is solid gold? Do you have anything to say about its supposed origin?"

The woman places her body between the camera and case. "I'd love to chat some more," she smiles coldly, "but I'll have to end the interview there. I have work to do before the opening. Thanks."

With that, the woman turns away from the camera and continues her conversation with her colleagues. The presenter looks rather hurt, but faces the camera with a typical news presenter's smile.

"Well, that's about it for now. The exhibition opens to the public in three weeks, when we'll carry the whole event live. Now back to the studio for the sports results with Andrea Hogan."

Shortly after this, the Knights should be sent on a short duration mission (no longer than a week), thus preventing them from asking too many questions at this stage.

MURDER AT THE MUSEUM

The second, and most important, part of the hook happens one week later, the day before the grand opening at the museum. The Church news reports another story tied to the museum and the artifacts recovered by the expedition. The event takes place at whatever time the Knights watch the local news and is the lead story.

"And now for the latest news, read by Douglas Chick."

<Camera zooms in to show a well-groomed man sitting behind a desk. A picture behind him shows the front of the museum.>

"Good evening. Tonight's main story...a break in at the museum ends in murder. Sometime in the early hours of this morning, intruders broke into the <Preceptory name> Museum of Antiquities. At some point during the robbery, Doctor Michael O'Shea, a local archaeologist who was working late on the artifacts recently brought back from southern Salus, disturbed the intruders." The picture behind the newsreader changes to that of a white male in his late Forties wearing glasses.

"Doctor O'Shea was found dead this morning by museum staff reporting for work, and several of the artifacts, including a valuable gold piece, are missing. A Preceptory spokesman has revealed that Doctor O'Shea, a local man who leaves a wife and three young children, was stabbed to death. Early reports are that no other items were taken.

"An inside source has revealed to us that strange symbols were drawn in Doctor O'Shea's blood, although the Lictors have not commented on this. A citywide search has commenced. No one from the museum was available for comment and the museum remains closed indefinitely as Lictors comb the area for clues.

"Other news...we reveal the contents of a secret Corporate report into food additives used in chicken feed..."

Within minutes, the Knights receive orders to haul their butts to the Preceptor Master's office immediately! As they are shown in by the Preceptor Master's adjutant, their commander is dressing down the Preceptor Intelligence Officer.

BRIEFING

"I don't give a damn! You're supposed to be in charge of intelligence in this Preceptory. How is it the first I hear of a high profile murder is on the main news channel? Dear God, what am I going to hear next on the news? That we've been overrun by Repbaim? You get your butt back to your office and you get me answers! Dismissed!"

As the PIO slips out the office, the Preceptor Master turns to address you.

"Now, sit down and listen good! I know you've heard the news and I won't waste time with background details. You're assigned to investigate this murder. All other duties are cancelled—I want you 100% on this as of five minutes ago. Lictor Primus Novak, the local Lictor chief, has been informed you're assuming control of the case. He knows to cooperate with you to his fullest extent.

"I want you in town within the hour armed for a hearts-and-minds operation, not war. Things are bad enough without you lot packing enough heat to take out a Repbaim stronghold and scaring the public half to death. Do I make myself clear, Knights?"

The Preceptor Quartermaster already has his orders. The Knights receive pistols, light armor, and basic gear. Absolutely no infantry support weapons, special weapons, or grenades other than baton, screamer, and stun grenades are to be issued under any circumstances. A Peace-maker APC has been placed at their disposal. If no hero has Driving d6+, then a Knight Vehicle Crew is made available, as well.

THE LOCAL LICTOR HOUSE

On arriving at the precinct house, the Knights are shown straight to Lictor Primus Kevin Novak, the local police chief. He is as polite as can be expected given the pressure he is under by the Preceptor Master and Preceptor Intelligence Officer. The Lictors have little to go on during the initial stages of the investigation, besides a dead body and some strange writing. Novak informs the Knights that the museum has been sealed off and the crime scene kept free of reporters.

What Novak Knows: See page 122.

THE MURDER SCENE

The museum has been closed to the public whilst the police investigate the murder. A total of five Lictors are on duty outside and another 20, including forensic experts, are working inside, interviewing museum employees, searching for evidence, and documenting the crime scene.

Inside, the Lictors have set up their crime unit in the lobby, where benches have been erected so the officers can take statements and store evidence bags. At least four officers are

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on duty here; three taking statements and one tagging the evidence. The main investigation is taking place in the Weisman Wing, the scene of the murder.

No matter how soon the Knights arrive, the body of Doctor O'Shea has already been sent to the coroner for an autopsy. Knights making a successful Common Knowledge roll realize this is fast work for a normal Lictor investigation, especially since the Knights are the investigating officers and they did not clear the body for release.

Asking around about this elicits little in the way of useful information—the officers first on the scene must have had forensic backup, as they photographed the body and called the paramedics to transport it to the morgue. Although the two officers can be described, they cannot be found at the scene and no one can remember their names, although one officer does recall that both were fairly new to the precinct.

The Weisman Wing is a scene of devastation. Many of the display cases are smashed upon the floor, several exhibits lie broken amongst them, blood covers a large area of the central floor (mainly centered around the disc outline of a body), and on the east wall, scrawled in what appears to be blood, are strange letters about six inches high. A Lictor photographer is documenting the writing when the Knights arrive. He has little to say about the letters, except he doesn't recognize the language and that it has been confirmed that it was written with the victim's blood. Other officers are carefully sifting through the debris for clues, occasionally stuffing potential evidence into self-sealing bags.

The Knights are free to snoop around as they wish, but there are few clues save for a cigarette butt, which is lying under a display case description card. It requires a Notice roll to detect the stub at this time (it is reported to the Knights 1d4 hours later if no one makes the roll). It has been extinguished for some time and no usable prints can be recovered from it. It is the most common Church brand, and thus used by almost every smoker in Church lands.

THE SECURITY CAMERA DISCS

If the Knights ask any of the Lictors or museum security guards whether there was a security camera in use, the answer is affirmative, although no one has yet checked the discs. This gives the Knights time to review the discs themselves. If they do not inquire about the cameras, then they are informed of their existence 1d4 hours later.

The security room for the museum is located upstairs and enables the guards to monitor every room that contains exhibits, as well as the lobby, the souvenir shop, and the restaurant. Each camera has its own video recorder with 24-hour data storage and is connected to a monitor. Remote controls for the cameras enable the guards to rotate them at will and zoom in and out on any specific area. Any Knight who makes a Common Knowledge roll deduces that security is fairly tight and any intruder would be caught on at least one camera.

When the Knights play the disc, give them **Handout #1** (page 129) and let them make their own conclusions.

The disc itself runs for another four hours before it runs out. Anyone watching it discovers a few more interesting facts. Around 0417 hours a man enters the frame. He is dressed in a long raincoat and is smoking a cigarette. He spends a few moments walking around the scene and studying the bloody writings before making a call on his cell phone. The image cannot be refined any further to show the number he is dialing. If any of the Knights have already met Mr. Jenkins (see page 106), then they recognize him instantly. Otherwise, they will have to try to identify him by other means. No one else enters camera until 0500, when the cleaners, who called the Lictor, arrive.

There are several tests the Knights can perform on the video if they so desire:

- * Knights with a technical background (GM's call) who wish to check the video for defects, may make a Common Knowledge roll to realize whatever caused the disc to stop capturing images was an external influence and not a disc defect. Trying to record something over the blank area reveals a perfectly clear picture when played back.

- * The same Knight can also try to enhance the quality of the video to give a clear picture of the intruder. This requires an Investigation roll. A high quality laser print out provides an easily recognizable photo image.

- * If a Knight specifically wishes to enhance the frames just before the white out, he must make a second Investigation roll. Upon successfully completing the project he spots that within a fraction of a second of the intruder's hand touching the artifact, a bright light begins to emanate from it. The light only reaches a few inches before the video stopped recording.

Knights without the appropriate Knowledge, or those who fail their rolls, can hand the discs over to intelligence officers back at

the Preceptory. They complete the tasks within 1d6+2 hours, or 1d4 hours if subjected to a successful Intimidation or Persuasion roll.

WHO ARE THOSE MEN?

Once the Knights have a photo image of the intruder they can run it through the Preceptory databases to track down a name and address. This requires an Investigation roll. The intruder's record sheet is presented as **Handout #2** (page 131) and should be given to the players at this time.

Once the Knights have IDed the murderer they can begin searching for him. The logical place to start is his last known address, although there is little useful information there—the Church correctional facility does not require released prisoners to list an address.

Aside from combing known haunts, the Knights are on a dead end chase. Only perseverance, a little luck, and roughing up a few of the local street punks will lead them to their man. The WM should ensure this information is found only after the scene **A Friend in Need** has played out. Once that is done, a lead takes them to **Last Known Address**.

Identifying Mr. Jenkins from the video (if they have not already met him in Weisman's office), proves to be extremely difficult. Although just a common citizen, his files seem to be fairly well hidden. An Investigation roll at -4 is required. This may give the players ideas that there is more to him than meets the eye.

Let them explore this avenue. If they have already met him and try to arrange another meeting with him, they are told he has left town on business and will not be back for some time. Assuming they have not met him, then the section on meeting George Weisman changes and another lawyer is present. Jenkins is a false lead designed to irritate the Knights—once identified on the video they *cannot* encounter him again in this adventure.

What little the Knights can get on Mr. Jenkins is found as **Handout #3** (page 130).

THE MUSEUM STAFF

Asking the museum staff what was stolen, the Knights are told that it was a special artifact and a few pieces of pottery. It is unlikely that a local buyer could be found for the artifact, but if the thief wants money, it could be melted down into gold bars and used. The worker suggests the Knights speak to the curator if they want more information about the artifact.

What the Staff Know: See page 122.

THE MUSEUM CURATOR

Doctor Ernest Watkins is the current curator of the museum and has held the post for many years. Watkins is shocked at the recent death of a colleague and has not yet fully recovered when the Knights visit. Although normally very busy, he makes time to meet with the Knights.

Watkins's office is typical of many academics, cluttered with papers and pieces of artifacts. Although there is plenty to search in the way of drawers and cupboards, there is nothing of use to the Knights' current investigation. Being the gentleman that he is, Watkins makes sure the Knights are given refreshments before he answers any questions.

Doctor Watkins, although head of the museum, did not have a great deal to do with the actual expedition, instead staying in the States to organize the exhibition of any artifacts found. Once the Knights are ready to leave, he remembers something that might be relevant.

"Before you go, I've just remembered something that might be important. If you hang on I'll just check my diary. Ah yes! About three days ago I was approached by two men on the same day; both had an interest in purchasing the golden artifact. The first...er...a Mr. Jorgen Pietersen, represented the Asgard Embassy Cultural Department. Very polite man, asked a lot of questions on the security of the museum and what we were planning to do with the artifact once the show was over.

"The other was a private businessman, one Christopher Towlowski. He said he was an independent purchaser of rare antiquities for other museums and private collectors. He wouldn't say whom he was representing though. I have both their business cards handy if you would like them. We had no intention of selling the artifact to anyone so I dismissed them."

Copies of the business cards are presented (**Handouts #4** and **#5**; page 27).

What Watkins Knows: See page 123.

INVESTIGATING THE STRANGE SYMBOLS

The writing on the museum wall is in a basic form of Cryptspeak, the language of the Rephaim. Only one person at the museum is capable of translating the words if the Knights cannot speak the language—the curator, Doctor Watkins. He has studied several Rephaim texts on behalf of the Preceptory over the years and holds valid security clearance.

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After a few moments checking, the scholar decipherers the text.

"Well, the writing is certainly Cryptspeak, though it is very rudimentary in some ways. Anyway, this message is incomplete. It literally translates as 'They, the master of the universe, will return/have returned/are returning from the skies in the year of...'

"It uses what we call the 'indeterminate form,' which indicates a tense, but it doesn't give us any dating evidence I'm afraid. No indication of past, present or future can be discerned from this fragment. Whoever wrote it certainly knew something of the idiosyncrasies of the language, definitely no common heretic.

"Look here, the verb 'to return' is used correctly in its 'return from' variant, rather than just as 'to return' as many amateurs would write. The use of verb suffixes is unusual, but correctly applied."

There is nothing else the Knights can glean from the writing. Whoever wrote it wore gloves and left no fingerprints in the bloody patterns.

If the heroes make a Cryptspeak roll, they read the following—"They, the master of the universe, will return/have returned/are returning from the skies in the year of..." If none of them speak the language, Watkins apologizes for his assumption and translates the writing.

THE LOCAL CORONER

The Knights have little evidence of the murder, the scene having been cleaned by the Lictors after their investigations had finished. The best records available are those of the coroner, who performed the autopsy on the deceased.

The local coroner, Doctor Emily Wainwright, is a middle-aged woman who detests outsiders sticking their noses into her work. What especially riles her are people who question her findings. She can be found at the morgue during normal office hours. The receptionist at the main desk inquires as to why the Knights wish to see the doctor. She is not at all fazed by the Knights' status and does not respond well to threats.

Assuming the Knights can make it past her, they are shown into Doctor Wainwright's office while the receptionist informs the doctor they are here. If the Knights wish to rummage around the office, have them make a Notice roll.

With success, the Knights find the file on the murdered archaeologist in the doctor's filing cabinet (**Handout #6**; page 133). The file contains several photos taken at the crime scene by a Lictor. The photos contained within are in full color and depict scenes of almost unimaginable brutality. Any Novice Ranked Knights must make a Guts roll or lose the contents of their stomach. Any Knight who makes a successful Healing roll notices the wounds bare more resemblance to those made by an animal's claws rather than a knife.

Give the Knights a few minutes free time before Doctor Wainwright enters her office. If she walks in whilst the Knights are searching her files, she becomes very angry and demands to know what is going on. She is used to working with Lictors and Knights and knows all about warrants and due process. Unless the Knights can calm her down, she makes a call to the Preceptor Intelligence Officer in his role as overall chief of the Lictors and lodges an official complaint.

On the other hand, if the Knights are behaving themselves when she enters, she is prepared to help them as best she can. She willingly shows them a copy of her report. If questioned about the wounds on the deceased, she says it had crossed her mind the wounds were particularly vicious and numerous, but appear to be the work of a lone attacker.

If the Knights ask why the body was brought here so quickly, she cannot answer—she just got a call to perform an autopsy. She can be of little other use and can only state the facts contained in the file.

The body is currently in cold storage in the basement. Knights with a medical background can run their own tests, but discover nothing more. Within three hours of the Knights' visit, the body has been removed—its location cannot be discovered. The corpse is removed by CIS agents working alongside the Lazarites.

THE BUSINESSMAN

Note: If the Knights have identified Mr. Jenkins from the museum surveillance camera, then he is **not** present at this meeting. Mr. David Hewlett should replace all references to Mr. Jenkins. There is also no ashtray and no cigarette present. Hewlett does not smoke. Hewlett is of average height, large build, and has close-cropped hair.

George Weisman's office is located on the top floor of a downtown office block, and can be located fairly easily. After all, one of the

museum's wings is named after him and he is well known in the local community. Basic information about him is presented as **Handout #7** (page 133). If the Knights take the time to make enquiries, give them the handout.

Weisman is head of Globe Electronics, a defense contractor. Knights who turn up without an appointment can expect to be turned away—Mr. Weisman is a very busy man and has little time for interviews that do not directly concern him. Trying to force entry is extremely foolish, resulting in security being called and the Knights threatened with arrest (a very real threat considering that Globe does military work for the Church). If the Knights call ahead to arrange an appointment, they receive one for 3:00 pm, the day after the Knights call.

When the Knights arrive for their appointment, they are shown directly into the office. The far wall is one expanse of glass, revealing the city beyond. In front of the window is a large antique desk, behind which sits a middle-

aged man of slight build. Paintings, many of them valuable, line the walls. Seated in a large leather chair to one side of the room is a man in a black suit, a briefcase rests beside him. On a small table near him stand a lamp and an ashtray with one dead cigarette in it. The brand is the same as the one found in the museum (that is, a "generic" brand).

The man behind the desk rises and welcomes the Knights. *"Good afternoon. I am George Weisman, and this is my attorney, Mr. Jenkins,"* he motions towards the suited man, who merely nods. *"I believe you have some brief questions for me?"* He then sits back down in his chair and invites the Knights to be seated, as well.

Weisman is an honest, if somewhat egotistical man, who talks about his work for the community as if it were common for all men to be so generous. He has very little to say about the matter at the museum, preferring to leave speculation to the media and the Knights.



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If the Knights begin to enquire into his business affairs, Mr. Jenkins interjects and asks them to keep to the matter at hand. The Knights have only ten minutes to ask their questions before Mr. Jenkins reminds Weisman that he has an important meeting with Cardinal Mitchell of the Office for Military Research. At this point, Weisman thanks the Knights and buzzes for his personal assistant, who shows the Knights to the elevator.

Meeting Weisman is a one-time chance for the Knights. Trying to arrange a second appointment proves fruitless as his assistant informs the Knights that he is in the Vatican for an important meeting and it is expected to last at least a week. She gives no further information, nor can any be found through other channels.

What Weisman Knows: See page 125.

THE ASGARD EMBASSY

The Knights may wish to visit or contact the Asgard Embassy in the Vatican to find out if Jorgen Pietersen actually works there. It requires a Persuasion roll at -2 to discover this from the embassy staff, as they do not have to reveal that sort of information to Knights (all staff are protected by diplomatic immunity). Friendly contacts in the CIS (if such are known to the Knights) can be used to find such information—the Church's spooks have ways of discovering such information legally, although it takes several hours before a reply is heard.

However the information is gained, the Knights learn that there is no one by that name at the Embassy. Pietersen is a fictitious name invented by the team from Project Revelation. Should the plan go badly wrong, the CIS can always point fingers at Asgard, their favorite fall guys.

THE PRIVATE BUYER

If a Knight browses the company's Stream site (details of which can be found on the business card obtained from the curator), he finds the usual sales blurb, a small catalog with some pictures, a photo of the owner (Mr. Tovlowski), and an on-line ordering form. The site is sparse and the quality indicates it has been built "on the cheap."

Millennium Antiques is situated in an older district of town, where there are plenty of shops but few residential areas. The streets, though far from being crowded, are normally busy with shoppers going about their daily business.

The storefront itself is rather bland, with only a small sign above the door to mark its presence. A large glass window allows viewing into the shop interior from the street. The first thing the Knights notice is the clutter of chairs, tables, lamps, statuettes, and so on.

Almost anything that can be considered an antique in the 24th century can be found somewhere in the shop. Although most of the items are of late 21st through 23rd century origin, there are a few pieces of English, French, and Italian origin dating back many hundreds of years. These carry price tags with at *least* six zeroes. Typically, there are only a handful of customers in the shop each day—much of the business is conducted over the Stream.

As the Knights open the door, a small bell rings. A few moments later, a middle-aged man in a suit emerges from behind a curtain situated at the rear of the shop. With a polite smile, he asks if he can be of any assistance.

If questioned about the artifact, he admits that he did approach the museum curator with an eye to buying it, although not for his shop. He produces a piece of paper from behind the counter and shows it to the Knights. The contents of the document are presented as **Handout #8** (page 133). Tovlowski has no idea how the man even knew it existed, since the object had not been revealed to the public.

Tovlowski then says that when the curator refused to sell the artifact he contacted the buyer and told him that he had none available, but would keep an eye open for any that came on the market. Knights who try to reach the e-mail address of the private collector find the account unreachable. This is another part of the Lazarites' plans to acquire the artifact.

Tovlowski has not been entirely truthful with the Knights in regards to inquiries about the artifact. Shortly after the e-mail arrived, two men visited his shop and offered him 120,000 Meters to have an item built and detailed to show signs of aging. They brought a design with them, which perfectly matched the golden artifact stolen from the museum, and told him that they would return in a few days. He was warned to keep quiet about his involvement in this.

The Knights *should* be suspicious of Tovlowski—he has the most to gain by buying the artifact and shipping it on. Nothing needs to go on his books and so proving this could be difficult. Surveillance of the shop does not reveal anything untoward, but breaking in or legally searching the premises does. The shop has an alarm system on the door and window frame, linked to the Lictors (2d6 minutes until they arrive if the alarm is activated), but otherwise

has no internal security. Behind the curtain is a small office area, where Tovlowski keeps pieces he is repairing and all of his notes on customers.

Buried in a pile of papers on a desk is a sketch of the golden artifact, complete with dimensions, and the name of a local jeweler. Finding it requires an hour's search and a Notice roll at -2. Threats toward Tovlowski's good health, or insinuation he might spend a few years doing hard labor for aiding a murderer, quickly lead the proprietor to produce the schematic.

"I didn't want to do it! I needed the money! They offered me 20,000 Meters to have a copy made and antiqued. I passed it on to a friend of mine who works in MacMillan's. You know, the jewelers in the main street. He has certain connections, if you know what I mean. They told me they would kill me if I mentioned this to anyone! I need protection! I'll testify in court if you'll protect me! The original? I don't know where it is. I don't have it. Maybe those men do, maybe that's why they haven't come back for the fake yet."

With a successful Notice roll, the Knights deduce the diagram has been electronically scanned and transmitted to someone. The number can easily be traced to an address—MacMillan's Jewelers, in the main commercial part of the city.

The fake is, in Tovlowski's mind, still *in situ* in the jeweler's shop. Tovlowski is a cautious man when it comes to money and he intended to get payment before delivering the goods. As the Knights later learn, the men have actually cut Tovlowski out of the loop (see *MacMillan's Jewelers' Shop* below).

What Tovlowski Knows: See page 126.

MACMILLAN'S JEWELERS

MacMillan's is in a higher-class part of town than the antique store. It is well known locally, mainly for the custom jewelry it produces, some of which is sold across the planet by mail order.

The shop fills two floors of the building in which it is situated, with a large display area out front and a vault and offices at the rear. The upper floor houses more display cases and the workshops. Six shop assistants work in the public area, as well as one security guard, and three office staff and the manager work in the offices. The workshop is generally staffed

by eight personnel. Security is very high, with alarms on all the cases and infrared beams across the shop floor. Concealed cameras also cover all areas of the store. The Lictors take a mere 1d6 minutes to arrive if one of the silent alarms is sounded. The shop is generally busy during the day, especially at lunchtime and early evening.

The Knights are treated well by the shop assistant, although she is quick to fetch the manager if official identification is produced. Marge Diaz, manager of this branch, quickly emerges from the rear of the store if summoned.

Diaz denies any knowledge of any transaction between the shop and Tovlowski unless threatened with legal action, at which point she suddenly "remembers" the incident.

"Ah yes! How could I forget? Mr. Tovlowski did call with an order for a most unusual piece. It was to be solid gold and created to a very specific design. He faxed me a copy of the item with all the necessary measurements, including the weight. I did think it a little odd, but business is business and he was paying cash."

"I would like to hand it over, but it's already been collected. Two gentlemen picked it up barely two hours ago. They paid cash, 272,000 Meters to be precise, and then left. Naturally, I made out a receipt. They gave their address as Hodgson's Ranch, just off the main highway out of town. Now, will there be anything else I can help you with?"

Searching the shop proves fruitless—the item has indeed been collected by the Lazaries.

HODGSON'S RANCH

The old ranch listed as the customer's address is located twenty miles outside of town, roughly four miles from the nearest highway. Access can be reached by an old, unmarked, dirt road that winds through light woods before emerging into open plains. The ranch itself is little more than a few wooden buildings, none of which have been repaired in years, surrounded by a chain link fence. A few rusty pieces of farm machinery sit in the yard.

There is no sign of habitation as the Knights approach, although a Notice roll reveals tire tracks in the dirt that are no more than a day or two old. There is plenty of cover if the Knights wish to scope out the farm first or merely start a surveillance operation.

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Staking out the ranch brings no useful information, no matter how long the Knights wait. Those who were using it have left the site already and have no intention of returning. The address was given as part of a plan to throw pursuers off the trail. It is likely, however, that the Knights will go in under cover of darkness to investigate.

Opening the gate in the chain link fence is surprisingly easy (no roll is necessary) as the padlock is of cheap quality and looks quite old. Likewise, the Knights can elect to gain entry by climbing the fence or ramming the gates with their APC if they are so inclined. Once inside the yard, the Knights can begin their search.

There is little to find of immediate interest, save for more tire tracks in the gravel, until the Knights search the old barn. Inside, aside from bales of straw, some rusty ploughs, and tractor parts, are four ferocious guard dogs. Their being here may convince the Knights the ranch is still inhabited. The dogs were originally used to protect the site and now that the site is deserted, they have been left to either escape into the wilds or starve to death. Once the barn door is open the dogs, who know their masters by smell, attack by pouncing. They may be animals, but they are not dumb, and they can be driven off by damaging attacks.

Inside the main house, there are signs of recent habitation, such as dirty plates, used food cans, and so on. There is little to no furniture, but there is a vidphone. Last number recall has been disabled. Knights checking the last number dialed from the phone with the operator need to make an Intimidation or Persuasion roll to get the information they want. With success, they are told the last number was to a local municipal airfield (they are given the number).

Once the Knights have finished their search and are preparing to leave, drop the next scene on them without giving them a chance to do anything else.

Attack Dogs (2 per hero): See page 127.

AN UNEXPECTED ASSAULT

As the Knights are leaving the main house, they spot two black cars speeding down the farm track. A lookout on the road can give those in the ranch one minute's warning as he sees their approach. The first smashes through the gate and skids to a halt just inside the yard; the second comes through the same opening in the perimeter and stops alongside the first. Knights who make a successful Notice roll spot Asgard diplomatic plates on both cars. All the doors burst open and armed men leap out,

firing a few bursts to provide cover while they hide behind the cars. Once in place, they begin firing at the Knights.

The attackers are well-trained professionals. If the Knights run into a building, they send a flanking force whilst providing heavy covering fire. If the Knights try to make a dash for their car, they spray both the car and the area between the Knights and the vehicle. Treat them as a unit of soldiers, not as common thugs who are lining up to be shot by gun-toting Knights.

If five or more of the attackers are badly wounded, they retreat, laying down excessive covering fire while boarding their vehicles. The attackers, to stop them speaking, shoot any wounded colleagues that cannot walk, and leave their corpses behind. Under no circumstances do any of them surrender to the Knights.

The Knights are likely to have a real fight on their hands, but teamwork and tactics should win them through. Any contacts called, such as a request for agency backup, will take a minimum of 30 minutes to arrive.

There are two possible outcomes to this scene; the Knights escape with their lives or they are captured or killed. Assuming the Knights win, they can search the bodies. Aside from the equipment listed, each carries an identification card stating that he is a member of the Asgard Embassy security staff and has limited diplomatic immunity. The cards appear to be genuine. Detecting them as fakes requires access to a technical laboratory, an Investigation roll, and 30 minutes work.

If there are any Lazarites in the Lance, there is a slim chance he knows one of the dead assassins, though not personally. Draw a single card from the action deck. If it is a Joker, the Knight knows one of the men from a previous posting.

If the Knights lose the fight, those that are badly wounded (i.e. will probably die without medical aid) are shot once in the head to finish them off. Those in better shape, or who have surrendered, are handcuffed and dragged to the waiting cars. All of the bodies are left where they lay, to be picked up and disposed of later by a clear-up team. Black hoods are placed over the Knights' heads to block vision and they are driven off.

Lazarite Strike Team (2 per hero): See page 127.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The Knights are driven around for several hours before ending up in a warehouse in the industrial district of the city. Each is tied to a chair, with their hoods still in place, and politely questioned. Those who refuse to answer or are generally uncooperative find themselves pumped full of truth serum to help them 'remember' the facts. Aside from the interrogator, there are six armed men present, all of whom have orders to shoot the Knights dead if they try to escape. The interrogator's life is forfeit if they try to hold him hostage.

The interrogator, who speaks with a slight Asgard accent (requires a Smarts roll to detect this), asks them about the artifact, the expedition, their business at the ranch, and so on. The WM should come up a list of around ten questions to ask the Knights, all of which should be related to the case. Plausible answers are believed. Those that sound too plausible are re-asked in different ways to try to catch the Knights out.

Once happy that they are just Knights investigating a routine crime, the interrogator has them drugged to the eyeballs and dropped off in a central location, such as a public park or shopping mall parking lot. The interrogator has no wish to bring more Knights down on him by murdering the characters.

AND IF IT DOES GO WRONG?

As with any encounter, there is always the chance that things will go wrong. Use of stunners or nonlethal damage could result in one or more of the "Embassy staff" being captured alive and unharmed. The Knights will undoubtedly then want to question him. Should this unfortunate event occur, the individual WM will have to make use of the following information as best he can.

The Lazarites all stick to the same cover story—they were told that a known terrorist wanted in Midgard for bombing government buildings was hiding out in the ranch. They do not know how the Asgard authorities learned of this, nor why the Church authorities were not informed. Their orders were to attack the ranch and kill anyone present.

The Knights are not pure as snow, and some may resort to torture to gain information (perhaps not believing the cover story). Regardless of the techniques, the Lazarites stick to their story—these men are hardened fanatics. Knights who claim to know one of the men are informed it is mistaken identity.

Should the "embassy staff" be arrested, they are removed from jail 2d6 hours later by the CIS with the approval of the Preceptor Master (who has no desire to become embroiled in a political dispute with Asgard).

CHECKING THE AIRPORT

Once the Lazarites have been dealt with, the Knights can call ahead to the airfield if they so wish, to try to gain information. On producing some official identification, the Knights learn three men listing the ranch number as theirs booked flights to Midgard on a Trans-Salus Airways flight leaving in six hours. One of them paid in cash but did not collect the tickets. This is, in fact, all part of a plan designed to throw would-be pursuers off the trail. The men did book tickets from the ranch (hoping the call would be traced) and they paid someone to pick them up from the airport (a patsy), but they have no intention of catching the flight or going anywhere near the airport!

The municipal airport is not very busy, with only a few flights departing or arriving each hour. There is only one departure lounge and only ten gates, all of which are reached from the lounge area. The flight the Knights want leaves from gate three.

No matter what the Knights do, no one arrives to claim the seats booked by whoever called from the ranch. The girl at the check-in desk can tell the Knights that the tickets were booked under the names of Benning, Smith, and Lockley. The man who paid was Benning, and he had an Asgard driver's license under that name. No luggage has been put on under the seat holders' names however. Knights who search the plane, with the aid of the check-in girl, are told that no one on the flight matches the man's description, but it is not unusual for such late cancellations.

This lead is a total dead-end and absolutely nothing can be gained from this encounter, except the knowledge that the Knights' foe is not as dumb as they might have liked to believe.

THE ARCHAEOLOGIST

Should the Knights enquire at the museum of the whereabouts of Doctor Andersen, they are told that she is at home, recovering from shock. Her address can be found via several methods including, but not limited to, the vidphone directory, her records at the museum (Investigation roll), using Connections, or asking one of her co-workers or the

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museum staff (Persuasion roll). The task is not difficult—the doctor is not trying to hide from the authorities and she actually has Lictor assistance to stop reporters bothering her.

Her house is in a fairly well-to-do area of town, although it is by no means extravagant. As the Knights arrive, they spy a car in the driveway and they can hear loud music blaring from one of the upstairs windows. Two Lictors stand guard at the driveway, but allow Knights through with few questions.

Knights who knock at the front door are forced to wait several minutes before the door is opened on a security chain. The face of an extremely attractive teenage girl peers through the gap at them. Anyone who watched the original news story recognizes her from the museum. The girl looks the Knights up and down for a moment, grunts “No press allowed in, sorry” and then slams the door shut without allowing them time to speak.

If the Knights knock again, the door opens almost immediately. The girl tells them, quite firmly and with language that no young lady should know, to leave her mother alone. If the Knights show any identification, the girl asks that it be handed over to her. As soon as it is, the door slams shut again. Several minutes pass before the door opens once more, this time fully. The girl informs the Knights that her mother is out back and will give them a few minutes of her time.

Once the Knights are allowed in, they can see that the girl is in her late-teens, and she sports denim shorts and a white T-shirt with the words “No Stream Censorship” printed on it. She stares coldly at any Knight who is obviously looking at her young but womanly body, mutters “Pervert” just loud enough to be heard, and then proceeds to wander off through the hallway towards the kitchen. Once there, she opens the back door and gestures outside. When the Knights have stepped through the door, she follows.

The back yard is fairly large and well kept. A small swimming pool fills the centre of the yard. Doctor Andersen is sitting in a chair reading a book on archaeology. As the Knights exit the kitchen, she puts the book down on a nearby table, stands, and walks over to greet them. She invites the Knights to be seated on the patio furniture and then asks her daughter, Paige, to fetch refreshments.

Alexandra then turns to the Knights and says, “I hope she wasn’t too rude. She’s been so protective since the...since...well, you know. I

guess that’s why you’re here. She means well, but she’s a teenager and you know what they can be like. Now, how can I help you?”

Paige soon returns with iced tea and sits down next to the youngest male Knight, smiling at him as she does so. Alexandra answers any questions as best she can, having nothing to hide and very little to reveal. If the Knights ask about her husband, she stares down at the floor for a few moments before answering.

“He died in a car crash about eight years ago. He was bit by a drunk driver and died before the paramedics could reach him. He was a good man. Wonderful temperament, never drank, and doted on Paige. Still, these things happen, don’t they?”

Knights making a successful Notice roll detect tears in her eyes.

Once the Knights have finished questioning her, she shows them to the door and bids them farewell. Paige accompanies her and says goodbye, but only to the Knight she has taken a shine to. Any Knight with an ounce of common sense can determine that the girl has taken a fancy to him.

What Doctor Andersen Knows: See page 124.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY?

Important Note: This entire section can be skipped if either the GM or the player involved would be uncomfortable with the situation. Although not life threatening, it does touch on a tender subject and was written in to show that not all danger a Knight faces comes from the Rephaim. The potential for some good role-playing is there if both parties are happy with the situation and act maturely. Note that Paige is considered to be at the age of consent in the United Kingdom, though only just. Alter her age as necessary to suit your country.

Ideally, this scene should be run with only the WM and lone Knight present. His comrades will then be able to react more appropriately if everything goes as written.

A few hours after the Knights visit Doctor Andersen, one of them receives a call. If the Knight has not given Paige his access code then the call was made to the Preceptory and re-directed. The call is from Paige and has been made to the Knight she has developed a crush on. She has tried to disguise her voice as her mother’s, but if the Knight spent any length of time talking to her, he can make a Notice roll at –2 to recognize her. If the Knight recognizes

her, she ends the call and refuses to answer it if he rings back. This section can then be ignored.

She invites the Knight (and is quite clear to make sure that it is only that one Knight) to dinner later that evening at her house. She claims to have some new information that might be of help to his investigation. Assuming the Knight accepts, the evening turns out to be very awkward for him. Paige has decided to make the first move on the object of her crush, even though it will only lead to embarrassment and heartbreak (unless the Knight fancies a spell in the Penitents for breaking his vow of celibacy). Normally Paige is a sensible girl, but she has great difficulty making friends and is not very good with boys her own age.

When the Knight arrives at the Andersen residence, Paige answers the door. If the Knight has brought backup, Paige will be momentarily stunned, and then splutter out that her mother was called in to work at the last minute and had to cancel. She then slams the door and hides in her bedroom. Paige is wearing a knee-length, low-cut, red dress that does not reveal too much flesh; she has also done her hair up, and applied her mother's make-up to an expert degree. Given her natural figure, she could easily pass for someone in her early twenties.

She invites the lone Knight in, claiming her mother will be along soon as she has gone to the shops for some wine, offers him a drink and a seat (all the chairs have books on, leaving only the two-seater sofa), and then sits next to him, holding a glass of whiskey she intends to drink herself. Any Knight worth his salt is now going to be nervous and looking for an excuse to stand up.

Unless the Knight is quick, Paige knocks back the whiskey in one gulp, coughing slightly, and then leans over and kisses him firmly on the cheek, whilst placing her hand on his thigh. It is expected the Knight backs away long before she gets much further in her exploration of his lower body. Once suitably spurned, Paige calls the Knight "a heartless bastard" and storms upstairs, tears flowing down her face. She locks herself in her room and refuses to speak to the Knight. At this point Dr. Andersen returns home!

The GM should handle the situation in the most embarrassing way for the Knight. The evidence against him is damning from the mother's point of view; a grown man is in her house alone with her teenage daughter, there are two glasses that contained, or still do contain, alcohol, the Knight has lipstick on his cheek, and her daughter has locked herself in her room!

Andersen immediately calls the Preceptory and reports the "crime." Moments later, the other Knights receive a call to arrest their colleague on suspicion of breaking his vows of celibacy. He will be thoroughly questioned before being released until further evidence is gathered.

Although the situation will eventually resolve itself when Paige confesses her crime, the intervening period (no more than 12-24 hours) should be hell on the unfortunate Knight. Sure it isn't fun for the poor sucker, but the role-playing opportunities are almost unlimited.

A FRIEND IN NEED

It is assumed that the Knights regularly monitor emergency channels, especially those of the local Lictors. However, if they do not do this then an alternate entry to this scene has been included below.

Around 11:00 pm on the night after the optional *Mistaken Identity* scene has finished, the Knights pick up an emergency broadcast made on a local Lictor channel. The operator is asking for a team to respond to an emergency call made from Doctor Andersen's house. The only car that answers is at least ten minutes away, giving the Knights time to arrive first on the scene if they push it.

If the Knights do not listen to Lictor broadcasts then one of their communicators beeps (either they gave Doctor Andersen their code or she rang their Preceptory and got immediately transferred through by a receptionist). A weak sounding voice comes over the phone. "*It's Alex...Alexandra Andersen...please...we've been attacked by an intruder...my daughter is hurt...please come...*" With that, the phone goes dead. The Knights can be at the house within five minutes if they push it.

However they hear the news, they arrive before the Lictors. The front door is open and no Lictor guards can be seen. Knights who search the house thoroughly, find the bodies of the two Lictors who were watching the house stuffed into a dumpster beside the garage. Both have been viciously stabbed. Whoever killed them did not take their flechette pistols, although he did take their handcuffs.

No one in the house answers any calls. A quick search of the ransacked property reveals both Alexandra and Paige handcuffed in the master bedroom. A cordless vidphone lies on the

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floor in front of the Doctor, who has been badly beaten. Her daughter lies unconscious beside her, bleeding from a deep cut to her neck.

As the Knights enter the room, Alexandra lifts her head briefly and smiles, before passing out. A Lictor and paramedics arrive ten minutes after the Knights if the Knights intercepted the radio call, otherwise they do not arrive until the Knights call them. A Healing roll is required to stabilize both women.

Once stabilized, both women can be taken to the hospital (or back to the team if there are secure medical facilities and the team is feeling particularly daring). When Alexandra regains consciousness, after about five minutes, she tells the Knights, who can probably keep the Lictor away long enough to get a statement if they are present, exactly what happened.

"We were watching TV, Paige and I, when the front door burst open. A man was standing there holding a knife covered in blood. He looked insane, his eyes were... <sob>...full of hate and fear. Paige tried to run past him but he grabbed her and put the knife to her throat. Oh God, I was so scared for my baby... <sob sob>...Is she going to be OK? He forced us upstairs to the bedroom. I thought he was going to rape us both... <sob>...I didn't know what to do! He began putting handcuffs on Paige's hands but she struggled free of his grip. Then he...he...be stabbed my little girl!"

Five minutes of deep sobbing follows.

"I'm sorry. I'm just scared. Where's Paige?...sniff...Can I see her yet? Paige fell down, covered in blood. I didn't know what to do so I tried to thump him. I had to protect Paige. He bit me repeatedly. I thought I was... <sob>...going to die! He tied me up and then did the same to Paige. He was babbling the whole time, talking about gods and how he was going to rule the world. It didn't make any sense.

"After he 'cuffed us he went down stairs. I could hear him searching the house. I just lay there, trying to remain conscious and talking to Paige. Letting her know I was there and she should hang on because help would be here soon... <sob>...He never came back upstairs. I went to the phone beside the bed and called for help. Where's my little girl? I've got to see her!"

Alexandra can describe the attacker in great detail. If the Knights have already identified him from the security camera video then the description matches. If not, they now have a good description of a suspect in the case.

Further details on following up this lead can be found in the above section entitled **Who's That Man?**

Alexandra is kept in the hospital overnight for observation, but only has to contend with a few bumps and bruises. Paige will live, no doubt thanks to the Knights, and is released in a few days. The wound will not scar, something her mother was worried about, but Paige will be a different person for the next few months as she rehabilitates after her attack. Knights with psychology training can help with this process if they so wish. Doctor Andersen will be extremely grateful for the assistance.

When Alexandra returns home and checks what has been stolen, she finds that only a few Egyptian artifacts (minor pieces she has collected over the years), and her journal (in which she has all her notes regarding the Church, her life's work), are missing. She is distraught over the loss of her journal and asks the Knights, assuming one of them has been gallant enough (or is interrogating her on the sly) to escort her back, to help retrieve it.

The Lictors post a four-man guard on the house and all of the officers are now in body armor and carrying flechette rifles. Naturally, the media surround the house with news vans, making the Andersen's life hell for several days to come.

LAST KNOWN ADDRESS

Pete Moulton's last known address is not in a particularly nice part of town. "Slum" is being too kind to the neighborhood. The streets are littered with broken cars on bricks, tires, rubble, stray dogs, and young kids who should be in school. The atmosphere is overtly hostile and easily sensed. If the Knights are foolish enough to leave their APC unattended while they follow up their lead, they return to find it covered in graffiti. Of course, no one on the street saw anything.

Knocking on the door of Pete's apartment gets no reply. The door is locked but a Lock-picking roll at +1 gains the Knights access, as will kicking it down (Toughness 7). Inside, the place is filthy, with mold on the walls and cockroaches running free. No one has inhabited the place for some time. The landlady, a large black woman somewhere between 40 and 60 years of age, can be found downstairs in her apartment. If questioned about Pete, she becomes quite vocal.

"That piece of shit owes me three months rent! If you find him, you get me my money. What you want him for anyway? You CIS or something, dressed like that? Hell, I might have known Pete would be in trouble! He ain't coming back is he? Damn my foolish bide for letting him leave. I should have shot the bastard! You see him, you tell him I'm gonna shoot his nuts off!"

As she says, the landlady has not seen him for three months and his apartment has not been used by anyone else. If the Knights ask about his known haunts she flies into another rage.

"Oh yeah, he used to bang at O'Malley's. You know the joint? Down on 8th Street. Shit! I bet he's blown my rent on gambling! Damn him! I always knew he was a badass mother. I should have got my rent in advance. You want anymore info, 'cause the TV is on?"

There are no further clues here and no one the street has seen Pete recently, not that they would tell the Knights anyway.

O'MALLEY'S BAR

O'Malley's is a pool hall in one of the rougher parts of the city. Frequented by all manner of criminals, it is not a place the Lictors visit in small numbers or frequently. Aside from pool hustling, a large amount of illegal gambling goes on behind closed doors at night, and the Lictors suspect that illicit drugs are also distributed from there, as well.

The front of the bar is nothing special to look at. A faded sign depicts the name "O'Malley's" and the walls are grubby from the filth of the city. All of the windows are barred and many are boarded up. Those that are not are too dirty to see through. There is a fire escape out back, which leads into a small, dingy alley, full of trash and home to a half dozen homeless people.

Upon entering, the Knights are hit by a tangible wall of cigarette smoke, stale beer, and even staler sweat. The lights are kept deliberately low and some areas are in near blackness. Around twenty patrons are in the bar when the Knights enter, many playing pool and the rest sitting at or near the bar. The conversation dies when the Knights walk in and most of the patrons glance towards them nervously. Many slowly reach for concealed weapons. The owner, O'Malley, is behind the bar serving. He looks at the Knights and grunts, *"What do you want?"*

What O'Malley Knows: See page 126.

If they start getting heavy, either with violence or by smashing the place up a little, he becomes more "amiable." Threats do not bother him too much as he is used to them from the Lictors.

"Hey look now! I don't want no trouble from you either! I don't know what cartel Pete's got himself into shit with, but it's nothing to do with me. Like I told your buddies, I'm only small time, pal. You want Petey? Hell, he ain't been here in a week. He had some crazy idea about stealing some stuff from the museum. You know, that new shit they found. He wanted me to fence it for him but I told him to fuck himself. I wasn't touching that shit. It's cursed. The media said so. If you want to know where he is, you ask his girlfriend. She lives down on Maple. Number 1382 I think it is. Ask for Suzy. She'll know where that no-life is."

Knights who question O'Malley as to the other men that came looking for Pete are given the following information.

"Three goons in black suits walked in here and started asking questions about Pete. When? Yesterday I think it was. Yeah, yesterday afternoon, about 5:00 pm. I gave them the same information I gave you. I don't want no trouble from you beavy types, I said. I just gave them the address and they left. Weird accents they had though. Drug dealers I reckon. I don't know nothing else."

SUZY'S APARTMENT

The apartment belonging to Pete's girlfriend, Suzy, is in a quiet, though lower class, area of town. If the Knights knock at the apartment door, they receive no reply. Gaining entry is quite tough; the girl was obviously security conscious. A Lockpicking roll or kicking it down (Toughness 9) is required to open the door. If the Knights use brute force, then one of the neighbors comes into the hallway to see what is going on. A quick flash of a sidearm has them scuttling inside their own apartment.

Inside, the apartment is a mess—someone has obviously searched it thoroughly. All of the drawers have been emptied out, the furniture has been slashed open, and most of the ornaments are broken on the floor. Inside the bedroom, the Knights find what is left of Suzy.

Her body lies face up on the bed, which is covered in blood. The blood has not yet fully congealed and a Healing roll reveals she cannot have been dead for more than a few



hours. A cursory examination shows that she was badly beaten before being shot twice in the chest with a 12mm AP round.

Once the blood is cleared away, the Knights can see her fingernails have been ripped out, she has severe gashes to her chest area, possibly made by a small blade, the soles of her feet have been slashed, her tongue has been forced down her throat, and something has burst her eardrums, causing her to bleed from the ears. It is hard to tell what caused her death; any of the wounds could have been fatal when combined with the others. Unless she lost consciousness quickly, she could have been in agony for hours before finally dying. Seeing the mangled corpse warrants a Guts check to avoid Fear for the next hour.

Searching the apartment reveals that someone was living with her—men's clothes are in the wardrobe and the laundry basket (which has been emptied onto the floor). One room, probably once used as a closet, has become some sort of bizarre shrine. Scraps of paper lie on the floor, obviously torn from the walls. The scraps are newspaper articles about the recent murder, magazine pictures of Knights fighting Rephaim, homemade drawings of the artifact missing from the museum, and an article about heresy from a Union newspaper.

HOW DID YOU GET MY NUMBER?

Once the Knights have had some fun following the leads and learning more about the artifact and the various factions that seek it, one of them (chosen at random from those that gave Alex their number) receives a call. The caller is male and identifies himself as the high prophet of the true gods. Pete is merely taunting the Knights and re-confirming to them that they are not alone in their search for him.

During the call, the Knight on the phone can make a Notice roll at -2 to identify the background noises. On a success he hears “--large burger and fries” called out over the gaggle of background conversation. Of course, that only narrows the location down to several dozen places in the city but it does mean that Pete is stationary.

“Hello Church man! See you haven’t found me yet, have you? You can’t find me because I’m a fucking god and you can’t think like me! You listening soldier? Good. You keep fucking listening good and don’t try to trace me! I’m mobile and I got me a

nice hostage as well. I see any pigs nearby and the little girl dies. You want that blood on your hands, fucker?

"I got your number off that nice Doctor Andersen. Lovely lady – she wanted me, you know. I could see it in her eyes. When I'm ascended, I'll make her mine. She'll get more than a Second Coming from Petey. So will her daughter! I saw you at their house. How gallant of you to come to their fucking rescue. I'll send you the video of us together if you leave me a forwarding address.

"I've got what you want, spook. Did you know others are after it as well? Bad men, trying to stop the gods returning. They killed poor little Suzy before I could. That pissed me off so fucking much. I wanted her for myself. It talks to me Knight man, it tells me the future. You're gonna fucking die at their hands! Slow, painful, messy death. Oh fucking yeah!

"Gotta go now. People to see, fortunes to tell!"

With that, the line goes dead. Pete will not stop to talk or answer questions. He just says his piece and hangs up. The Knights can track the call simply by contacting the Preceptory if they put the call through. Otherwise, it requires a Persuasion roll and a chat with the operator. The call was actually made from a payphone in a burger bar in the main shopping mall, but that is over ten minutes away from the Knights' current location.

By the time they arrive, there is no sign of Pete. Any alerted Lictor units arrived too late to catch him as well. An Intimidation or Persuasion roll, and showing a photo of Pete while questioning the staff, is required to gain the following information:

The staff confirms a man matching Pete's description or photograph was present and he had a little girl with him. He ordered two meals to take out and then made two calls on the payphone. The girl looked upset over something and the staff considered calling mall security. They have no idea where he went after he used the phone.

The Knights can try to garner whom he called from the phone by calling the operator. A successful Persuasion roll from a legitimate law enforcement agency convinces the operator to assist them. One number belongs to one of the Knights' communicators; the other is listed as belonging to the local news station. All the lines to the news station are permanently busy.

NEWS OFFICES

When the Knights arrive at the media offices, the place is a bustle of activity, with reporters and camera crews getting ready for an outside broadcast. Any of the reporters can be stopped long enough for the Knights to learn that some nut claiming to be a prophet of some new gods is holding a hostage on the roof of Saint Mary's Church. The camera crews are planning to capture the whole thing on film for the evening news.

If the heroes do not visit the media station, Lictor Primus Novak contacts them and orders them to get to Saint Mary's immediately!

SAINT MARY'S CHURCH

Saint Mary's is a large church in the heart of the city. By the time the Knights arrive, the Lictors have sealed off the area, although a large crowd of on-lookers has gathered behind the barriers. Lictor Primus Novak is already present and organizing his men. A SWAT van waits nearby and three snipers can be seen checking their rifles. The Knights can recognize Pete as the hostage taker. He has one hand around the child's throat and a megaphone in the other.

Novak, if approached, tells the Knights, *"Some nut has taken a kid hostage. He's on the roof and is threatening to throw her off unless we give him access to the news channels. The news teams will be here shortly. We'll give him what he wants and hopefully he'll clam down. We don't want to shoot until we know the kid is safe."*

Just then, the news team arrives on the scene and begins setting up their cameras and sound equipment. From up on the roof Pete calls down to the assembled Lictors, onlookers, and media.

"Listen to me you pathetic fools! I am the prophet of the true gods and I have been sent to tell you that you are all fucking doomed! My masters will soon arrive to fuck you all over. None of you will survive their coming unless you swear allegiance. I, their chosen disciple, will become a living god and rule over this world. As a sign of my love for you scum, you may bow down before me and praise my name. If you refuse, I will throw this child off the roof as a sacrifice. Do I make myself fucking clear?"

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Knights who acquire a bullhorn can talk with Pete for a few minutes. Let them ask him some questions, learn something about him and his motives, and then move straight on to the next scene before they can put their plan into action.

As the Knights talk with Pete, a third figure appears on the roof—a large man dressed in a black suit. Pete hears his approach and turns to face him. Shoving the girl back onto the roof, Pete reaches into his jacket pocket and produces the golden artifact stolen from the museum.

"My master!" he shouts, "I have brought the item as you requested! Wait...you're not one of them, you're a..."

The stranger lunges for the artifact and manages to get one hand around it. The child screams and almost loses her footing. Novak begins shouting orders to his men to set up a safety net in case anyone slips. Pete and the stranger remain locked in hand to hand combat for few moments.

The stranger suddenly steps back, half of the artifact in his hand! He pulls a large gun from his jacket and shoots Pete through the face four times in rapid succession. Pete's body flies from the roof and plummets to be ground, smashing into the grass, the second part of the artifact flying from his grasp. Lictors and paramedics immediately begin rushing to him, though it is obvious no one could have survived the shooting and fall.

The Knights should be able to retrieve Pete's half of the artifact with little bother. If they search Pete's body they also find a few grams of illegal drugs and the knife used to kill Doctor O'Shea.

The stranger can either be met coming down from the roof or upon leaving the church, from which he calmly walks. Much as the Knights would obviously like to arrest him, the local Lictors arrive first and start reading him his rights. The man produces identification and the Lictors question him for a few moments before allowing him to leave. As he heads to his car the Knights can try to talk to him.

The stranger shows the Knights his ID card, which identifies him as a member of the CIS.

"Moulton was wanted in connection with a drug smuggling ring. He resisted arrest. He died. If you want more details, contact my office. This investigation is terminated."

The last sentence hangs menacingly in the air before the stranger turns and walks to his car, in which can be seen two other similarly attired men.

Asked about the golden artifact, the agent replies, *"I have no idea what you are taking about. I suggest you get back to your duties before I am forced to contact your superiors."*

The Knights, regardless of their host organization, have no legal rights to interfere in a CIS investigation without consulting their superiors first. The local Lictors will not interfere on their behalf and any Knight with an ounce of intelligence should realize that starting a fight would result in a bloodbath captured live on TV, action being taken against the Knights by the CIS and their superiors, and an investigation into the Knights' reckless behavior.

Should the Knights decide to tail him, the car drives to the local airport, where the three occupants meet up with an Angel carrying Lazarite markings. They board a dropship and it takes off, heading south. The air traffic controllers can be contacted with a successful Persuasion roll at -2, but they are under orders to let the Angel go. Naturally, the Angel never reaches its logged destination, a nearby major city, instead landing in the country and being destroyed. The piece of the artifact the stranger possesses is lost to them.

THE KNIGHTS AS HEROES

What happens if the Knights enter the church to stop Pete themselves? Let them get to the roof without incident and let them talk to Pete for a bit. If any Knight is stupid enough to draw or raise a gun, Pete threatens to kill the girl by, *"Teaching the bitch to fly,"* a threat he is only too happy to carry out.

Any damage to Pete, regardless of the actual damage it causes, forces him backwards, whereupon he loses his footing and falls. The artifact hits the edge of the parapet and breaks into two—one half resting on the roof, the other half falling with Pete. Nothing the Knights do can stop this from happening—especially if they try to use occult powers on live television!

However, what if the Knights choose not to try to stop Pete? Don't worry, if they have not stopped him in five minutes a Lictor sniper is ordered to blow his head off, forcing the same (above) chain of events into motion. A single shot rings out and the church roof is splattered with blood, bone, and brain matter. Pete's lifeless body twitches once, and then falls over the edge. The young girl scrabbles free and holds onto the roof for dear life.

As the Knights look down at Pete's body they spy a man in a black suit pry the artifact from Pete's hand. He leaves the crime scene without bother from the Lictors and departs in a black car. The rest of this is as above if the Knights manage to get a tail on him.

No matter what course of action the Knights' take, *the Knights have to gain only half the item and Pete has to die*. Cheat, lie, steal, beg, but make this happen. Why only let them have half the relic? First, it gives the WM a chance to set up a follow-up adventure with members of Project Revelation trying to steal the other half. Second, it creates a mystery for the Knights—what is the CIS' true involvement?

RETURNING THE ARTIFACTS

Once Pete is dead and the Knights hold half the artifact, they need to decide what to do with it. Although keeping it is an option, they should consider returning it. Firstly, this is good publicity for their Ordo and secondly it may give them new contacts, either Doctor Andersen herself or one of the museum staff. Of course, they could return the fakes and swap them back before they are noticed.

If the material is returned to Doctor Andersen, she is absolutely delighted. The return of the artifact means her work was not in vain and the museum can display the pieces. She is extremely grateful to the Knights, gives them tickets to the opening gala, and responds well if any (male) Knight invites her out on a date. Of course, her daughter Paige will not like this one bit, nor will the Ordo, but that is something the Knight will have to deal with over time.

The museum is also very grateful if the Knights return the material to them. What remains of the artifact, goes on display within the week. The Knights are given tickets to the opening and the gala that follows as a sign of the museum's gratitude. The museum also gives the Knights media coverage if they want it. Refusing could be a little awkward, but the heroes should be resourceful enough to find a working solution.

AFTERMATH

Once Pete is killed and the pieces of the artifact returned, the case is effectively over. Trying to search for the artifacts taken by the stranger results in no leads, no matter how hard the Knights search—the man and the artifacts have simply vanished into thin air (leaving

the WM a handy hook for another adventure). The museum displays the remaining piece, if returned, and the exhibition proves to be very successful, especially with the extra media coverage. Alexandra and Paige Andersen begin rebuilding their lives.

Later that day, the local news carries the following story.

"Welcome to the news in your area. Lictors were forced to end a hostage situation at Saint Mary's Church today by shooting dead a man armed with a knife. The man, identified as Pete Moulton, an unemployed local man, was wanted for questioning regarding the recent murder of Doctor Michael O'Shea at the city museum. A Lictor spokesman said there was little else they could do as Mr. Moulton, a known drug addict, was about to kill his hostage, a young child who has not been identified. The hostage was unharmed but said to be in a state of near-hysteria. No other suspects are wanted with regards to the murder of Doctor O'Shea."

There is a small chance that a Knight and Alexandra form a relationship over the course of this story. Use this opportunity to introduce her as a fully developed character.

THREATS AND PROMISES

This scene should be inserted at an appropriate point in the plot, but definitely before the end sequence. It is best used after the team has made some headway into the investigation and when they are in a public place, such as a mall or restaurant. Although many teams may naturally resort to guns to end the encounter, the mass of innocent bystanders makes this impossible.

A large, dark-suited man wearing mirrored shades appears beside the heroes. For a few moments, he says nothing—he just stares at them. Then he speaks in a low tone to the Knights.

"I'm going to say this slowly and only once, so listen carefully. Forget about the museum murder. Forget you ever heard of Doctor Andersen. Forget about the artifact. If you persist in your current investigations your lives will be made...uncomfortable."

With that, the man turns and leaves. If the Knights try anything, they had better be careful; the area they are in is full of innocent shoppers or diners minding their own business. Any Knight

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who grabs the man is roughly pushed aside and the man hisses, “*Let it go*” before he resumes his exit.

The drawing of any guns, even stunners, is going to start a panic, involve the local security, and be broadcast all over the media. It is important to the plot that **no** combat takes place between the Knights and the stranger. If weapons have been drawn and a fight looks imminent, have the stranger pull out a portable vidphone and dial the Preceptor Master. He speaks in hushed whispers before handing the phone to the Knights. They are ordered to back off and let the man go.

A wise party will try to tail the stranger, hoping to gain useful information. Once outside, the WM has several options: He can lead the Knights on a merry chase before they lose him, he can hop into a black car that speeds off into crowded traffic, or he can simply vanish into the crowd. Once again, the Knights should gain **no** information on the stranger. He is included simply to stir up the feeling there is more going on than the Knights realize.

CAST

Most of the NPCs in this adventure do not have stat blocks. Only those NPCs the heroes will be liaising with on a long-term basis or those who are presented as antagonists have full stat blocks.

LICTOR PRIMUS KEVIN NOVAK

Age 41; well built; grey hair and moustache; rarely smiles; overworked; keeps photos of his family on his desk.

Novak is a career policeman, following a family tradition that goes back three generations. He began his career as a beat cop and quickly rose through the ranks. His skill and dedication to his work earned him a transfer to the local SWAT team, where he stayed for six years. He was promoted to Lictor Secundi in his third year on the team.

Three years ago, he was hit in the leg during a bank robbery shoot-out. Although not badly injured enough to remove him from the force, he was disabled enough that he had to take a desk job for the rest of his career. His promotion to full Primus status is fairly recent and this is his first big murder case.

Novak is a family man with five children and he wants the killer caught as soon as possible. He has ordered his men to use “necessary

force” to bring the killer to justice, effectively giving them carte blanche to shoot on site and worry about the paperwork later.

WHAT THE NPC KNOWS...

About George Weisman: “*Mr. Weisman is an extremely influential man, a personal friend of the governor and senator. His work in the local community is well known to everyone. He’s not a suspect in this case.*”

About the Expedition: “*I don’t know any of the details. You’d need to speak to someone at the museum for that. I do know that the curse the papers mentioned is a load of crap. You didn’t know about that? Some of the workers died in the final days of the dig. All natural causes, apparently, but you know what the media is like. I’m surprised the censors let the story out.*”

About Doctor O’Shea: “*A brutal killing. One of the worst I’ve seen. Whoever did it was obviously after something in the museum. No doubt to pay for his drug habit. Don’t worry, we’ll catch him.*”

About the Artifacts: “*There was nothing of any real interest except that gold necklace, or whatever it was. You’ll need to question the museum staff—they’re being rather tight-lipped right now. Museum security is pretty tight though, so they should be safe.*”

About Paige: “*The Andersen girl? What about her? We’ve had no need to question her.*”

About Dr. Andersen: “*We’ve spoken to Dr. Andersen. Naturally, she’s very upset about the whole incident. Don’t go bothering her. Just some friendly advice from the local Lictor Primus.*” <cold stare>

About Pete Moulton: “*He’s got a record as long as your arm. Mainly small stuff, but he’s a known drug dealer. What does he have to do with this case?*”

TYPICAL MUSEUM STAFF MEMBER

Age between 20 and 50; conservative clothing; fair racial mix; polite; scared.

WHAT THE NPC KNOWS...

About George Weisman: “*Mr. Weisman is an extremely generous man. He funds many local projects, including one entire wing of the*

museum. He's an amateur archaeologist you know? I've never met him of course; he's far too busy to visit."

About the Expedition: *"I don't know much, except that it lasted six months and has been hailed as a great success by all involved. If you want more details, you'll need to speak to Dr. Andersen. The curse that the papers reported has always been a popular media joke since the 1920s."*

About Doctor O'Shea: *"A terrible waste. He worked here for years. Everyone knew him and he was well respected. I hope his killer is caught soon and...well, that's up to the legal system."*

About the Artifacts: *"I haven't gotten close to them. I know that there's some pottery and other bits and pieces. Security is awfully tight for a few bits of broken jugs though. I think that Mr. Watkins, the curator, had someone offering to buy them just before the robbery. I don't know any more details though. You'll have to ask him."*

About Paige: *"Dr. Andersen's little girl? Oh yes, I've met her. She often comes here to look around while her mother is working. A lovely child, so polite and very well educated, given the circumstances. What? Oh, that's not for me to say."*

About Dr. Andersen: *"A credit to the museum! Her latest work has really put us on the map. She's a lovely lady as well, so kind, and helpful. Pity she travels so much; must be hard on her daughter."*

About Pete Moulton: *"I don't know a Pete Moulton."*

DOCTOR ERNEST WATKINS

Age 53; tweed suit; grey hair; hazel eyes; glasses; speaks in upper-class English accent.

Ernest Watkins has been curator of the museum for 15 years. Before that, he held the title of deputy curator for ten years. Ernest is an expert on American Indian culture, specifically that of the Navaho tribe. In his youth, he was an enthusiastic field archaeologist, but arthritis has forced him to take a back-seat role.

WHAT THE NPC KNOWS...

About George Weisman: *"Mr. Weisman is a credit to the community. His donations have revitalized parts of the city. To be honest, without his aid we may have had to close down a few years ago and sell out to the Department of Antiquities."*

About the Expedition: *"A worthy endeavor. I must confess that I was a little dubious about its validity, but Doctor Andersen has proven herself. A pity those four men died though. Most unusual on a modern dig. You will be wanting to know about the curse as well, I suppose? There was a famous excavation on Earth in the 1920s. There were some accidents and deaths. Well, the press immediately fabricated the story of a curse. To be honest, until the local media mentioned it I'd forgotten all about it. At least it shows there is one reporter who knows a little something about history, I suppose."*

About Doctor O'Shea: *"A great loss to the museum, his family, and the community. He was a good worker, very loyal, and highly talented. His loss will be mourned."*

About the Artifacts: *"Although most are only bits of pottery, there was one special item; the team uncovered a golden artifact in rock strata millions of years old. You know what that means, yes? Yes, that's right, this is an alien artifact! Don't worry, it is quite harmless,—our technicians ran a battery of tests. It seems to be ornamental."*

"Normally we would have had to inform the Department of Antiquities, but our museum is rather special. Thanks to it being on Preceptory land, we're immune from that law. And you can imagine what would have happened if we had reported it! We'd have lost all rights immediately and it would have ended up hidden in some archive. Aside from that brief glimpse on the news, no one outside the museum knew the artifact even existed. It was going to be our big crowd draw."

About Paige: *"I assume you mean Doctor Andersen's little girl? I don't really see much of her. She hangs around the museum sometimes. Did you know she was on the expedition? Not in any official capacity, of course."*

About Dr. Andersen: *"I don't know what I can say about her. She's very talented and is destined to go a long way. This find has really made her name in the field. I just hope that some other museum or the Department of Antiquities doesn't poach her from us."*

About Pete Moulton: *"I don't know anyone by that name. Does he work here?"*



DOCTOR ALEXANDRA ANDERSEN

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Knowledge (History) d10, Intimidation d6, Investigation d8,

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Notice d8, Persuasion d8

Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal (her daughter)

Edges: Very Attractive

Age 37; brown hair; green eyes; wears little make-up; attractive; sports casual clothes most of the time.

Alexandra Andersen, nee Waiteman, was born and bred in rural Tomaculum and as a child developed an interest in history. As she grew, the interest became an obsession and by the age of 14, she had joined several local archaeological clubs sponsored by the Office of Antiquities. In college, she studied Archaeology, as well as Egyptology and Architecture. It was here that she met her late husband, Sam Andersen.

Although highly skilled and motivated, archaeology is not a field that is easy to break into, and Alex, as she prefers to be known, spent years after graduation travelling to digs as a consultant and advisor. At the age of 23, she gave birth to her only child, Paige, and whilst her daughter was young, she suspended her work to concentrate on researching the legends of a "lost colony" believed to be located deep in the jungles of Nova Europa.

Sadly, Sam was killed when a drunk driver hit his car and Alex had to raise Paige by herself. Rather than farm her off to relatives, she started to bring her daughter on expeditions, educating her herself as best she could. She has some guilty feelings that she has denied her daughter a proper childhood; they rarely remain in an area long enough for Paige to settle into school and she has few good friends.

Alex currently works for the local museum and lives comfortably from her wages and book sales.

WHAT THE NPC KNOWS...

About George Weisman: *"I don't really know Mr. Weisman that well. He is very well known in the local community for his charity work though. I don't think I can tell you much more about him. I've only met him once and all other correspondence comes through his personal assistant."*

About the Expedition: *"There have been rumors of a 'lost colony' for years. I've dedicated much of my life to researching it, but evidence was always hard to find. Just before we set out to investigate, we received an anonymous letter, giving us precise locations. Once there, we easily located the site and spent*

six months investigating it. I have a full set of notes if you're interested? They're my only copy though, so you'll have to be careful."

About Doctor O'Shea: *"A good man. He was a family man, you know. I don't think he had any enemies; I don't know who would want to murder him. His murder was a shock to all of us at the museum. Just shocking!"*

About the Artifacts: *"The gold artifact is unique and most definitely millions of years old. I can't give you any further explanation yet, not until I've had chance to perform a full examination. That will take a few weeks and even then I might not be able to give you a firm answer—it may just be a lump of ancient alien gold. There's definitely no sign of technology present, at least not that we can detect."*

"Do you think whoever murdered Doctor O'Shea was trying to steal it? I expect the Office of Antiquities will be annoyed. They sent an official around about four days ago. Said he was just doing some routine paperwork about the artifacts. Seemed very interested in where exactly I found the object. I told him he would have to wait until the official press release. He didn't seem very happy with that. He just got up, said, 'We'll see,' and left. I've got a record of his name in my diary."

(Tracing the name through the Office of Antiquities reveals that no official matching the man's name or description works for the office, not are they investigating the artifacts).

About Paige: *"My daughter? She has nothing to do with this. She's only a child. If you think she had... Look, I think you'd better leave. I don't want to answer any more questions right now."*

About Pete Moulton: *"I'm sorry, I don't think I know anyone by that name."*



PAIGE ANDERSEN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d8, Knowledge (History) d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d10

Charisma: +4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal (her mother), Stubborn (teenager)

Edges: Very Attractive

Age 16; black hair; green eyes; well-developed body; wears scruffy clothing, bad attitude toward authority figures.

Paige is the only child of Dr. Alexandra Andersen. She is independently minded and far more advanced for her years, both mentally and physically, than other children her age. Although she has been dragged from expedition to expedition and tutored by her mother, she is intelligent and proud of the work her mom does. She seeks to emulate her in many ways.

Although her unusual schooling has meant she has made few friends, her computer skills are quite accomplished, and she has many friends across the world through the Stream. Basically a good girl, she has experimented with hacking and has made a close friend on the Stream, whom she knows only as "Spider."

Her active lifestyle has given her a well-developed body and older boys are starting to take an interest in her, something she has noticed but rejects. When she has spare time she practices her gymnastics, reads, and plays loud industrial music.

Paige never really knew her father well, he died when she was only eight, but her mother talks about him all the time. She is very protective of her mother and is convinced that no man can ever replace her father. Knights getting too friendly with Dr. Andersen will have to face the tantrums of a teenage girl!

To Knights, other than the one she has taken a fancy to, she is a typical obnoxious teen, refusing to completely co-operate, even when asked to by her mother. To her "favorite Knight" she is happy to talk for hours, so long as they are away from her mother, of course.

WHAT THE NPC KNOWS...

About George Weisman: *"The rich guy? Yeah, I know of him. He spoke to mom about that last dig. Never met him though. Are you rich? No, you're not allowed money, are you? What's that like, having to beg for everything you need?"*

About the Expedition: *"Man was it hot! Kinda weather where wearing any clothes at all makes you sweat like a pig. And not a power outlet in sight for my datapad! It was cool though, all that old stuff. I even saw the bodies. Yuck! That freaked me out."*

About Doctor O'Shea: *"He worked with mom. I met his family once at a university party. Man, whoever whacked him was a real psycho! You don't think he'll come after mom, do you? The killer I mean. You gonna be around to protect us?"*

About the Artifacts: *"I didn't really have much to do with them. Mom only brought me along to help catalog the smaller finds. I know the big one is gold though. Probably worth a few Meters in the right hands as well." <gives a teasing smile>.*

About Alexandra: *"Mom? She's pretty upset, as you can probably guess. I just wish the press would leave her alone. She didn't have anything to do with it. Say, you're a Knight, can't you stop them coming around or something?"*

About Pete Moulton: *"Who's he, another Knight? No wait, I bet he's on the Ten Most Wanted list, isn't he? Hell, it's so cool knowing you!"*

GEORGE WEISMAN

Age 67; white; dark brown hair; grey eyes, dark business suit, well manicured.

George Weisman is head of Globe Electronics, a large firm specializing in radio and radar components. The firm rapidly grew and became involved in military contracts. Weisman has a low-level Church security clearance because of his military work. Aside from being a successful businessman, Weisman is also a keen amateur archaeologist and donates money to the local museum, as well as numerous other charities. Barely a few weeks go by without his name being linked to some worthy local cause.

WHAT THE NPC KNOWS...

About the Expedition: *"The expedition was a great success, despite the untimely deaths of four of the members. I don't know all of the details, though."*

About the Artifacts: *"I only managed to catch a brief glimpse shortly after they arrived. I prefer to let the experts do their work before I view any displays. Yes, they were put in the wing I sponsored. I donated the money so the museum would be able to host new displays and special exhibitions. My lawyer has all of the paperwork if you wish to check it."*

About Doctor O'Shea: *"I had only met Doctor O'Shea briefly, at the opening of the new wing. By his record, he was a well-talented man. I believe he leaves a wife and children behind. A fund I organized several years back will make sure that the family does not go without. Mr. Jenkins has all the details if you wish to check them."*

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About Dr. Andersen: *"Alexandra Andersen? A most charming woman and excellent company. I've only met her the once, but she is very hard to forget. We are lucky to have her at the museum. Her talents will take her a long way in the field of archaeology."*

About Paige: *"Paige? Paige Andersen? Yes, she was at the opening. Polite child, if a little boisterous at heart. I'm not a family man so I haven't had much experience with children. I believe she accompanies her mother on expeditions."*

About Pete Moulton: *"I don't know anyone by that name. Ask my assistant when you leave to check our company personnel files to see if he is in there."* (He is not).

CHRISTOPHER TOVLOWSKI

Age 53; average build; grey hair; glasses; well-made suit; smokes a pipe.

Christopher Tovlowski was born to a Polish family. His father was an antiques dealer on Earth and later set up a shop on Salus. Christopher carried on the family trade when his father died thirty years ago.

Aside from his legal activities, Tovlowski dabbles with stolen goods and knows a few sources, but he is generally law-abiding. The visit from the mysterious men has made him greedy and, whilst he knows he is involved in something wrong, he is willing to go through with the deal—on his terms!

WHAT THE NPC KNOWS...

About George Weisman: *"I have sold a few minor pieces to him over the years. He rarely visits personally—he sends his lawyer, Mr. Jenkins, if he wishes to purchase an item."*

About the Expedition: *"I remember reading something about it in the papers. Wasn't it going to some first landing site or something?"*

About Doctor O'Shea: *"I read about that in the papers. Shocking to think it can happen on your own doorstep, metaphorically speaking of course."*

About the Artifacts: *"I'm planning to see them when they go on display. Well, that assumes that the stolen ones are returned, of course. I doubt they'll be as good as true antiques, you know, ones from Earth, but I'm sure they will be interesting in their own way."*

About Dr. Andersen: *"The archaeologist from the museum? She never buys anything, but if I acquired any artifacts, I'd ask her for her opinion. They say she is very talented in her field."*

About Paige: *"I'm sorry, who?"*

About Pete Moulton: *"I don't know anyone by that name I'm afraid."*

O'MALLEY

Age 31; heavy build; thinning brown hair; blue eyes; grubby clothes, cigar butt in corner of mouth.

O'Malley is a low-level hoodlum, who lets drug dealers use his bar as a selling point so long as they pay him a cut of the profits. He is generally obnoxious and loud-mouthed but, like most bullies, soon backs down when people stand up to him.

WHAT THE NPC KNOWS...

About George Weisman: *"I don't think he ever drinks here. Not his sort of place really. Hub! Hub!"*

About the Expedition: *"What are you on about? I don't keep tabs on them highfalutin' academics. You gonna order or you just wasting my time, pal?"*

About Doctor O'Shea: *"That guy who got wasted? Murder a minute in these parts. I'm sure the pigs'll sort it out when they stop eating donuts and start working for a living."*

About the Artifacts: *"Worthless bits of crap. You think people would have better things to waste money on than going to see stuff like that."*

About Dr. Andersen: *"That sexy dame from the museum? I saw her on the news channe;. Man, she's got a nice ass. Shame she don't visit here. Reckon me and the boys could show her something worth uncovering. Eh, lads?"*

About Paige: *"Who? Look, we ain't got no young girls working outta here. Now, I can help you find some if you want. Cost ya though."*

About Pete Moulton: *"Never heard of him. Now, you want that drink?"*



PETE MOULTON

Pete is a psychopath, torn apart by the visions he has been having and his drug habit. His language is for a mature audience. If playing with younger players or those who dislike foul language, temper his responses accordingly.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d12, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d10, Investigation, Knowledge (Occult) d4, Notice d6

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Death Wish (after the "gods" return), Delusional (Major), Habit (Major: heroin)

Edges: Berserk, Improved Frenzy, Improved Nerves of Steel, Level Headed

Gear: Molecular knife (Str+d4+2)

Age 27; average build; unshaven; worn clothes; carries a small knife; homicidal.

Pete Moulton was born a criminal. From his earliest days, he stole from friends, family, and strangers alike. By the age of 12, he was a member of a violent street gang and became a drug addict at 15. Pete feeds his habit through burglary and mugging.

Amongst his other bad points, Pete is also thoroughly corrupted. Many years ago, he began to hallucinate. The visions started after a particularly bad hit and they have gotten worse since. Although not a true psion, Pete picks up the latent hostility of the streets and it feeds his rage and anger. He is a bitter man.

When he grabbed the artifact from the museum, he activated something within it and began receiving visions of strange beings. He has not understood the true meaning of the visions and believes that angels are speaking to him, telling him that he will become a god if he obeys their wishes.

What little sense of humanity and decency Pete has left urges him to kill himself. Although capable of suicide, his deranged personality will not allow it, and Pete will try to provoke the Knights into killing him, thus ending his misery.

The parts in parenthesis are WM-only information and should not be read to the players.

WHAT THE NPC KNOWS...

About George Weisman: *"The rich guy? Mr. Charity? What has he ever fucking done for me, eh? His kind won't be spared come my ascension."*

About the Expedition: *"The angels told me about that. Oh yeah, those deaths were sooo cool. Wanna die, fucker? You come any closer and you're fucking dead meat, pal!"* (He actually read about this in the papers).

About Doctor O'Shea: *"Who? The museum guy? He had to die. I have a fucking destiny and no one is gonna stop me reaching it. You bear me, fucker? Hey, you listening? I'm gonna tell the whole fucking world what I've seen! I KNOW THE FUCKING FUTURE!"*

About the Artifacts: *"The dark angels sent me to get it. It doesn't belong to you! When I return the artifact, they're gonna make me a fucking god! Just you wait 'til they get here!"* (Pete planned to steal the artifacts to pay for his drug habit—he knew nothing of the golden artifact until he broke into the museum. His confused state has caused him to believe the angels have spoken to him for much longer than they really have).

About Paige: *"Mmmm...I'd sure like some of that sweet pie. Reckon she'd go with a guy like me? Hell, I'll make her! Just you wait until I ascend. Oh yeah, she's gonna beg for more from her Uncle Petey! Did you see the mark I gave her? She's mine now! I fucking own her!"*

About Dr. Andersen: *"Oh yeah, fucking A-1 body. I've been in her house, y'know? Wanna know what color her panties are, boly man? Sure you do. I can see it in those lusty eyes of yours. Imagine me with her and her ripe little daughter. You gettin' a hard-on, hero?"*

ATTACK DOG

These are very large dogs, bred for aggressiveness.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Notice d10, Stealth d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

* **Bite:** Str+d6.

* **Go for the Throat:** Attack dogs instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.

* **Fleet Footed:** Dogs roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.

LAZARITE STRIKE TEAM

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Guts d8, Heal-

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ing d8, Intimidation d8, Lockpicking d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Rock and Roll

Gear: Light armor (+4), 12mm SMG with two AP magazines (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8, Auto, AP 6), three filament grenades (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, MBT), one stun grenade (Range: 5/10/20, MBT, see *Necropolis Update*), one screamer grenade (Range: 5/10/20, MBT, see *Necropolis Update*), molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), headset communicator, medpac

UPDATE: POLICING

The details on law enforcement in *Necropolis 2350* cover dioceses and archdioceses, but not Preceptories. In accordance with their being immune to standard Church law, the Ordines have managed to extend certain rights to the citizens who serve them. In this particular instance, that is the right to be policed by the local Preceptory, not the regular Curia-backed police, and be judged not in the Bishop's Court but by a council of Knights.

Naturally, the Curia has complained bitterly that bishops should retain authority over all citizens, regardless of where they live. However, the Knights also have the right to ship any criminal to the Bishop's Court for trial.

Most petty cases are handed over to the bishops, if only because it creates less administrative work for the Ordines and promotes good will. Major cases are generally heard in the Preceptory, as it is an excuse for the Knights to prove their loyalty to the Church and to gain some PR with the general populace (who often fear a trial by Knights means an immediate guilty verdict because of the Ordines' strict vows).

There is also the matter of one-upmanship. On more than one occasion in the past, Knights have caught a dangerous criminal and handed him over for trial to the Bishop's Court, only to have their role in his capture be heavily downplayed in the media.

STRUCTURE

The senior law enforcement officer in any Preceptory is the Preceptor Intelligence Officer, a senior Knight whose position accords him the same respect, but not actual rank, as a Knight Commander. Although he is outranked by the Preceptor Master, the Preceptor Master rarely, if ever, gets involved in his subordinate's work.

His duties include considerably more than just policing the Preceptory estates, so, except in the smallest Preceptory, he appoints a deputy. The deputy, a Sergeant Commander, runs the day-to-day policing. He holds the title *Lictor Primus* while in office. In modern terms, he is effectively the Chief of Police.

Depending on the size of the settlements in the estate, a number of Lictor Secundi (the equivalent of precinct captains), may assist him. A town generally has one Lictor Secundus for every 20,000 souls.

The police on the street are Sergeants. Smaller Preceptories rotate Sergeants from the combat-ready stock, whereas larger ones have a permanent force of Sergeants purely for policing civilians. These carry the title *Lictor Sergeant*. Although they retain 10-man Lances, these are divided into five pairs. Lictor Sergeants are armed as regular Sergeants, but also carry batons, stunners, and, in riot duties, shields.

Knights sent on policing duties fill an awkward position. Although they are expected to show due respect to the Lictor Primus and Secundi, their title means they are actually only directly answerable to the Preceptor Intelligence Officer, a fellow Knight. In most cases, the PIO waives this responsibility to the Lictor Primus, meaning the Knights actually serve under a Sergeant, albeit an experienced one.

The typical roles Knights fulfill are that of special investigators and tactical strike teams. Being of sterner moral fiber, they are also called on to handle cases involving heresies, something to which the Inquisition vociferously objects.

Every Preceptory's police force is served by at least one representative from the Office of the Bishop's Attorney. They are on hand to ensure suspects have access to legal representation, to make sure the Ordines follow the letter and spirit of the law when dealing with criminals, and to try to secure a trial in the Bishop's Court. Since they serve the Curia, legal representatives are viewed as potential spies and troublemakers by default.

Administrative duties are handled by civilians from the local estate, thus providing citizens with honest jobs. All citizens serving in this manner are carefully vetted. Any criminal record prohibits a citizen from serving with the police.

HANDOUT #1:

MUSEUM SECURITY CAMERA FOOTAGE

The camera, apparently situated above the main doors to the Weisman Wing, covers most of the central exhibit area. Low-level lighting illuminates the area. The time stamp reads 0215 hours. The scene remains unchanged until 0219, when a man dressed in casual clothing enters frame. The playback is a little fuzzy and his features are not easily recognizable. He is clearly not a museum staff member on duty, as he constantly whips his head left and right as if looking for someone. He makes his way over to the golden artifact brought back by Doctor Andersen's team and leans over to get a closer look.

Suddenly he spins around, obviously disturbed by something he has heard. At the bottom of the frame, another man enters. His dress and manner seem to indicate that he is a staff member, although not a security guard. He walks up to the intruder, his right hand outstretched and his index finger pointing towards the exhibit.

The intruder lunges for the display case and knocks it to the floor. He reaches down for the artifact, just as the staff member charges him and they both hit the ground. A brief scuffle ensues in which the staff member is pushed aside. The intruder reaches for the artifact...and the playback suddenly goes blank.

The whiteout continues for almost fifteen minutes and just as quickly as it began, it stops, revealing the exhibit room again. The room is a mess, with broken display cases and artifacts strewn across the floor. The staff member lies near the case that held the golden object, a dark stain surrounding him. On the back wall, writing can just be made out in the dim light. There is no sign of the intruder. The time stamp reads 0234 hours.

HANDOUT #3:

MR. JENKINS

Personal Details: Jenkins, Samuel Michael Clarence. Born 2298, Martha's Vineyard, Maine, Earth. No surviving family.

Salus Arrival: 2314.

Reason for Earth Departure: Transfer of father (died 2315 in automobile accident)—Church Colonial Administrator in now defunct Office of Colonial Affairs.

Education: No records surviving before 2314. Attended Church school in New Vatican City on Church scholarship. Graduated Vatican Law School with honors 2324.

Ordo Service: Entered Ordo Lazari Sancti 2325. Achieved rank Senior Knight 2330. Promoted to Preceptor Estate Officer 2331. Transfer to Frontline Preceptory by own request 2335; served as Preceptor Administrator. Left Ordo 2338.

Civil Employment: Joined Office of Supreme Justice, Office of the Pontifical Court 2338 on personal invitation of Pope. Joined Globe Electronics, a Church-backed company, as corporate lawyer in 2342. Promoted to head of Legal Division 2347.

Criminal Record: No known criminal record.

HANDOUT #2: CRIMINAL RECORD SHEET

Name: Peter Moulton

Aliases: Pete Moulton, Weird Pete, Peter Molton

Last Known Address: Church correctional facility



Age: 26; Height: 5' 11"; Weight: 164 pounds

Build: Average; Hair: Brown, dark; Eyes: Green

Racial Type: Caucasian

Distinguishing Marks: Two-inch scar on upper left forearm

Criminal Record:

Possession of Controlled Substances (2344)—fine 500M

Petty Theft (2344)—30 days imprisonment

Aggravated Assault (2344)—3 years imprisonment

Possession of Controlled Substances (2348)—fine 1000M

Willful Destruction of Public Property (2349)—fine 500M and 100 hours community service. Final warning issued.

Subject is scheduled for reeducation upon next arrest.



HANDOUT #6: CORONER'S REPORT

Coroners Report

DECEASED Doctor Michael O'Shea RACE SEX AGE

TYPE OF DEATH: (Check one only) Violence ☐ Casualty ☐ Suicide ☐ Suddenly when in apparent health ☐ Found Dead ☒
In Prison ☐ Suspicious, unusual or unnatural ☐ Execution ☐

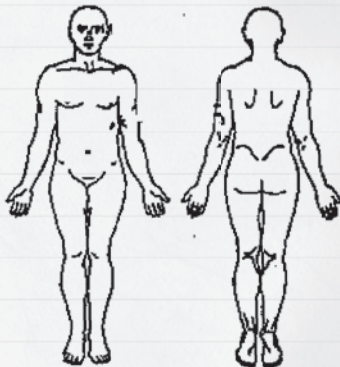
Comment:
 If Motor Vehicle Accident Check One: Driver ☐ Passenger ☐ Pedestrian ☐ Unknown ☐

Notification by Address
 Investigating Agency

Subject: White male, early Thirties, height 5' 9", weight on arrival 218 pounds, blood group A positive, appendix scar, small scar on left arm indicates animal wound in past. Subject identified by contents of wallet.

Findings: The victim shows multiple wounds on his hands and chest. Hand wounds are mainly slashes and indicate he was trying to defend himself during the early stages of the attack. Wounds to chest puncture heart and lungs. A total of 137 individual external wounds present. The wounds are ragged.

Possibly inflicted by a dull-edged weapon of approximately four-inch length. Attempt to remove heart has resulted in several ribs being broken and pulled outwards. Twelve internal stab wounds to organs. Subject missing roughly four pints of blood. Cause of blood loss is definitely the puncture wounds and attempted extraction. Time of death put at between 0200 and 0300 this morning.



PROBABLE CAUSE OF DEATH	MANNER OF DEATH	DISPOSITION OF CASE
	(Check one only)	1. Not a medical examiner case ☐
Accident ☐	Natural ☐	2. Autopsy requested Yes ☐ No ☐
Suicide ☐	Unknown ☐	Autopsy ordered Yes ☐ No ☐
Homicide ☐	Pending ☐	Pathologist <u> </u>

Coroner Presiding: Dr. E. Wainwright

Date Signature of Agent Signature of County Medical Examiner

HANDOUT #4: BUSINESS CARD #1



HANDOUT #5: BUSINESS CARD #2



HANDOUT #7:

GEORGE WEISMAN

Personal Details: George Carlton Weisman, born Mjollnir Colony, Midgard, 2283

Salus Arrival: Native

Reason for Earth Departure: N/A

Education: Graduated Midgard University 2300 with Honors degree in Electronic Engineering.

Military Service: Joined Asgard Army Signal Intelligence as 1st Lieutenant in 2302. Served one four-year tour achieving rank of Captain. Left with honorable discharge. Moved to Nova Europa 2308.

Civil Employment: Founded Globe Electronics 2312. Current personal wealth valued at 126 million Meters. Donates large sums of money to local charities and Curia causes. Keen amateur archaeologist. Holds Level Two Church security clearance due to business contracts.

Criminal Record: No known criminal record.

//Appended notes on Globe Electronics.//

Globe Electronics is a firm specializing in radio and radar systems. Currently valued at 5 billion Meters. Total workforce estimated at 5,700 across Salus. Globe Electronics performs classified military work for the Church on long-range radar systems and low frequency communication. All projects are rated at Top Secret or higher. Current projects classified under Project Narrow Focus. The CIS has been notified of your search.

HANDOUT #8:

STREAM MESSAGE

From: Simon Hiscox <simon.hiscox@trcnetworking.stream>

To: "ctovlowski@milliant.stream"

Subject: Sales Inquiry

Am looking for unusual artifacts, specifically golden amulets, armbands, etc. For private collector with money to spend.

Regards,

Simon Hiscox



TALES FROM THE FRONT LINE ONE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Tales from the Frontline*! This mission pack contains a complete adventure, a shorter mission, and three quick tales written for the *Necropolis 2350* campaign setting. If you intend to play in these missions, you should **stop reading now**. Advanced knowledge of the scenarios will only spoil your enjoyment of the game. There's also a quick set of rules for designing non-combat missions.

The WM should read each adventure before play begins. Knowing the basic flow and details in advance will greatly speed up play and make the game run smoother.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

You need a copy of the *Savage Worlds* rule book and the *Necropolis: 2350* Savage Setting. The *Necropolis* Figure Flats are highly recommended.

CHARACTERS

Each adventure is designed around a squad of four Knights of Seasoned Rank. For larger groups or more experienced characters, the WM should adjust the number and stats of opponents appropriately to create an exciting challenge. Use the archetypes from the *Necropolis 2350* setting book if you need pre-generated characters. Each archetype has been designed as a starting character, and thus should be awarded four advancements (to bring it to 20 XPs).

SNATCH AND GRAB

This mission begins as a "simple" operation to grab Rephaim specimens, but quickly involves the Knights in an attempt to rescue civilians left behind in enemy territory for a decade.

WM Note: This mission introduces two new forms of Rephaim (Necroscope and SBACula) and two zombie variants (grenadier and sniper). The latter do not count as new forms of Rephaim for the purposes of successfully completing the mission—they're just regular zombies with a defined role in the armies of darkness.

BRIEFING

Preceptories operate 24-hours a day every day of the year. The Lance receives orders to attend a briefing late one evening. Read the information in Player Handout #1 to the group, and then give them a copy of the briefing. Hand them Player Handout #2 at the same time.

The GM should ensure that no Knight has a backpack radio. The quartermaster refuses to issue one, as their mission doesn't call for it. It's also a heavy piece of kit, and the Knights are under orders to travel light.

In the briefing room are four other Knights—the Lance's support team. Operating the APC are Knights Fitzroy Malhoon and Oskar Nuttall. The Nephilim pilot is Senior Knight Elisabeta Bogdanovich, head of her Lance. She is assisted by Knight Wayne Jennings. All the NPCs use stats for Knight Vehicle Crew (see page 157) and are Templars. Create Ally Sheets for the APC crew.

Once the briefing is over, the Knights are ordered to return to their barracks and get as much sleep as possible—they'll be woken at 0400 hours the next morning.

TALL STORIES

As the Knights enter the barracks, their comrades probe them for information about their mission. Several Knights have been into Olisipo on similar raids, and most all know of someone who has gone there.

NEPHILIM DROPSHIP

The big brother of the ubiquitous Angel, the Nephilim is a vehicle transporter. Its cargo bay can hold one Prophet APC or one light tank (Flagellant, Nazareth, Proverb, or Purifier), three Sinai, or six Daniel quad bikes. No passenger seats are installed, so crews must sit inside their vehicles during the journey.

Its weapons are described in terms of air support. See *Necropolis 2350* for details on how these work. Nephilim rarely serve in a support role, though. Instead, they unleash their weapons as they come into land or take off, driving back enemy forces or clearing obstructions.

Acc/Top Speed: 30/250; **Toughness:** 40 (24); **Handling:** +0; **Crew:** 2

Notes: AMCM x 4, Fixed Gun, Heavy Armor, Night Vision

Weapons:

- * Flechette chain gun (nose)
- * Rockets x10 (30mm)
- * Rockets x2 (200mm)

MODIFIED JOB SUPPLY TRUCK

The four holding tanks have Toughness 17. Thus, only a creature with Strength d12+5 or higher can escape, and even then not easily.

Acc/Top Speed: 6/25; **Toughness:** 25/20/20 (15/10/10); **Handling:** +0; **Crew:** 2+6

Notes: Heavy Armor, Night Vision

Weapons:

- * 30mm autocannon turret mounted (40 rounds)
- * 2 x Passover 6cm AT missile tubes (no reloads)

Heroes who mention the nature of their mission are rewarded with a few snippets of information. Regardless of whom they converse with, the Knights get the feeling there is more to their tales than the speaker is letting on.

The docklands' streets are choked with abandoned vehicles and rubble. APCs don't maneuver well in the debris, so most

Lances preferred to set up a static base and hunt for Repbaim further afield on foot. There's plenty of cover in the ruined buildings, and ambushes have proven successful in the past—any common Repbaim are gunned down quickly, leaving the target specimen isolated.

The Knights can make Streetwise rolls to pry a little more information about the city. With success, roll a d6 and read aloud one of the stories below. On a raise, they learn two random stories.

d6 Result

- 1 *"I was there a few years back. Man, it was creepy. I kept hearing these ghostly voices over my headset communicator, but no one else did. The Senior Knight reckoned it was a malfunction, but I'm not so sure. That place is full of ghosts."*
- 2 *"A friend of mine went into the city back along. He swore blind something was watching them. He said it was humanoid and moved fast, but he never got a clear look. Could have been a shadow, I suppose, or a trick of the light."*
- 3 *"Never again! We were on a night mission. It was black as pitch and we heard a baby crying. Man, it was freaky. We hunted around, but we didn't find anything. Put the fear into my Lance for sure."*
- 4 *"Hey, you guys remember Knight Artillerist Andropov? Big guy, bald as a coot. Yeah, well, he told me he saw something real big flying over the city during a thunderstorm. His Senior Knight radioed the Dropship, but there was nothing on its radar."*
- 5 *"They send you in light on ammo to stop you getting the urge to go ballistic and start a fight. We had one kid, he's dead now, got the jitters as soon as we left the APC. He blew through three magazines before we'd gone 20 yards. Idiot was shooting at shadows."*
- 6 *"I heard one Lance set up camp overnight in ruined buildings. Things kept vanishing or moving around when no one was looking. Got the entire Lance so scared they abandoned the mission."*

ENTERING THE CITY

The morning drill is no different to any other mission—wash, dress, eat, grab weapons, and load up. By 0530 hours the Knights are strapped into the uncomfortable seats in the modified Prophet, which in turn is inside the Nephilim.

“Good morning,” chirps Bogdanovich in a voice far too lively for the time of day. “Weather radar shows low cloud and light showers over the drop zone, but nothing rough. Estimated touchdown is 0645 hours local time. We’ll be coming in fast and braking late. If you’ve had a big breakfast, grab a bag. You puke over my floor, you clean it up.”

“Senior Knight, please make sure the APC is ready to bail out the moment we hit dirt—we don’t want to be on the ground a second longer than necessary. Give us a second for final checks, and we’ll get you airborne.”

The journey is bumpy, but the turbulence is minimal. Bogdanovich continually updates the Senior Knight on their progress. After an hour, she informs the mission commander to get ready—the city is coming up fast.

Video feedback from the gun camera to the Senior Knight’s position shows the blackened, withered ground typical of a Dead Zone. Up ahead, you can just make out the shattered remains of the warehouses and buildings of the old docklands. Giant cranes, bent, buckled, and twisted, claw upward like skeletal fingers.

Stretching out from the city toward Tomaculum is the overgrown and cratered ruin of Highway 23D. Hundreds of burnt out vehicles litter the highway.

The Nephilim drops low, but doesn’t reduce speed. The Prophet driver starts the engine. Bogdanovich’s voice crackles over your headset communicators. “Touch down in 5, 4, 3...”

The pilot kicks the thrusters into reverse as she wrestles the bulky Dropship to the ground. A sudden increase in gravity slams you into your seats, and everything starts to fade to black.

Have the Knights make Vigor rolls. Those who fail momentarily black out, leaving them Shaken. As is typical of the chain of command in the Ordines, the Prophet driver waits for orders to clear the landing ramp. Only when

the order is given does the Prophet roar into life, its heavy tires squealing as they seek grip on the slick metal deck.

As soon as the Prophet is clear, the Nephilim’s engines roar. Like a bloated bird, it blasts off into the sky, heading back north.

NOSING AROUND

Use the **Survivors** map from *Necropolis 2350* for the docklands, but litter the battlefield with rubble and wrecked vehicles. Resting against one of the wharves, tilted over to one side, is a damaged freighter. Stretching off to the east and north are more streets. The Prophet begins on the only crossroads. The Knights begin inside the Prophet.

No building has a roof, most have gaping holes in the walls, there isn’t an intact pane of glass in sight, and most structures show signs of intense burning. Great piles of debris and deep craters block the roads, as do the remains of abandoned vehicles. The wrecked freighter is lying on its side, having suffered a hit from a bomb.

The characters are now free to explore their surroundings for an hour or so of game time. There’s plenty of ruined buildings for them to nose around in, as well as the damaged freighter. No buildings contain anything of any great interest or value. The Knights don’t know this, of course, and Rephaim could be lurking anywhere.

Before the Rephaim turn up (see below), one Knight picked at random begins to hear ghostly voices over his headset communicator. He can’t make out any words (the signal is too weak) just the impression of voices. Have the Knight make a Guts roll as well. With failure, he suffers the effects of Fear until after Scene 3 is complete. No other Knight can hear the voices, even if the Knights lends a comrade his communicator.

CONTACT MADE

Whenever the group is suitably split between locales or is getting bored of searching empty ruins, have the Rephaim attack. A small patrol stumbles across the Knights during a routine sweep.

The Rephaim enter from the northern edge of the map. The unlimited possibilities for the dispersal of the Knights makes exact placement in the adventure impossible. Place them in whatever position the first Knight can

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see them. In some instances this might be at a great distance, while in others the Rephaim could be practically adjacent.

Deal action cards and let battle commence. Remind the heroes, if necessary, that they are seeking new specimens for capture—the Ordines want them alive, not shot to pieces.

As well as providing the Knights with two new forms of Rephaim to capture—a Necroscope and a SBACula—the attackers should try to deprive the Knights of their Prophet. The SBACula has the power to do this, but is likely to make itself a prime target for elimination. Should it be killed, the GM can bring a single exploding corpse into play. It emerges from the ruins somewhere within 10" of the APC and tries to get close. When it gets within blast range, it detonates! Don't panic if the APC remains intact—there's another way to destroy the vehicle coming up soon.

In the event the new Rephaim are gunned down, roll as you would any normal Extra to see if they are truly dead or whether they are just Incapacitated. So long as one is alive, the Knights can bag him and call their mission a success.

Should both be slain, repeat the attack a short while later—the sounds of the fight (flechettes are silent, but grenades and SBACs are not) alert other Rephaim. Don't repeat the process a third time, though. *Necropolis* isn't a setting where the heroes always win. No matter where in the docklands the Knights search, there just aren't any more Rephaim present. Sooner or later they'll call for evacuation.

Knight Vehicle Crew (2): See page 157.

Necroscope: See page 159.

SBACula: See page 159.

Zombies (2 per hero): See page 159.

Exploding Corpse: See page 158.

RAIN OF FIRE

The Dropship is within radio range whenever the Knights require evacuation. In the event they are getting hammered, it can provide air support, but only for a single round. As the Dropship comes in, read aloud the following text.

The Nephilim roars into view through the low cloud. Bogdanovich wiggles it from side to side to indicate she's spotted you. The thrusters scream into life as it begins its rapid descent.

A large shape, black, serpentine, and winged, drops through the cloud directly above the descending Dropship. With a sickening crash it slams into the Nephilim, its clawed legs tearing through the armored frame like it was made of butter. Bogdanovich reverses the thrusters, trying to gain altitude, but the creature attached to the Dropship has made it unstable and too heavy.

The beast opens its mouth and rips into the cockpit. As it does, it unleashes a blast of hellfire directly into the crew compartment. The Dropship shudders, wobbles like a wounded bird, and begins to plummet earthward!

Give each hero one round to start running in whatever direction they want. Knights who want to guess the likely impact point must make a Notice roll. A multi action penalty applies as normal if the hero also wants to run in the same round.

The Nephilim is actually heading for the Prophet. No matter where it is or how fast it moves, the APC gets crushed by the spinning wreck as it careers through the debris, carrying its Rephaim load with it.

Roll a d12 and read it like a clockface. Then roll 3d10 and count this many inches in the indicated direction. This is where the mangled Nephilim comes to rest (it smashes through any buildings in its path). It then explodes for 5d10 damage in a Large Burst Template. The Rephaim, actually a hell beast, is destroyed in the explosion, as is the APC (and probably its crew).

WE NEED A RADIO

The nearest Preceptory is 75 miles away, far beyond the range of the headset communicators worn by the characters. Unless they fancy walking through Dead Zone Beta, they'll need to find a powerful radio transmitter. Fortunately, the city was large enough to have a media broadcast center for both television and radio. The Knights would know this, as Church cities tend to follow the same pattern. Unfortunately, it was located in the core city, which is five miles south of the docks.

The Knights have no idea exactly where the station was located, but such buildings tend to be in the administrative part of the city, and the telltale dishes should be visible once they get into the ruins.

The APC is beyond repair, but some of the abandoned vehicles might be in running order. Scavenging enough parts to get a single car working requires a Repair roll at -2. With success, the wreck runs long enough for them to reach the radio tower. A failure means the group is going to have to walk through enemy territory.

Should the party elect to start walking the 75 miles home, the GM should have them attacked by whatever Rephaim forces he feels

is appropriate. At best, they Knights encounter 1d4 patrols each of 2d10 zombies of skeletons. At worst, they may face tanks or powerful Rephaim out hunting.

RADIO GAGA

Debris and abandoned cars make the going slow along the highway, but fortunately there are no Rephaim present. Once they enter the



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suburbs, the Knights quickly spot the radio mast. Despite the heavy damage all around, the facility looks largely undamaged.

One of the outer walls has been reduced to rubble. Behind it is a series of offices, the furniture destroyed and scattered. The transmitter machinery is in a room behind this. There's a communicator set almost identical in design to a backpack radio in the same room, used by technicians to broadcast test signals after repairs. However, several of the circuit boards are fried, and a few key elements have been struck by debris. It's not a major repair job, but it'll take a few minutes.

Place ten counters in front of the Knight making the repairs. Each raise removes one token, while a raise reduces the total by two. Multiple raises have no additional effect. When the last token is removed, the radio is ready to use. Each roll can be made in a single round, as it's really a matter of swapping circuit boards and some spot soldering to connect wires.

Time, though, is something the Knights don't currently have. Once the Knights have made their first successful Repair roll, a Rephaim patrol stumbles upon them, having been alerted by the sound of the car gunning through the city streets.

The front of the communication suite measures 24" long and is a low wall with a dense rubble field (8" long) in front. Treat moving through this as difficult ground. The office is 6" deep and filled with debris (difficult ground). All that separates the office from the electronics is a thin partition wall (Armor +3).

If the Knights posted sentries in the outer office, the Rephaim are spotted 24" away. Otherwise, check for Surprise when the Rephaim reach the rubble outside the offices.

Any shots fired *into* the building have a chance of damaging the electronics. A Shooting roll which comes up 1 and doesn't hit an Innocent Bystander instead penetrates the wall. Draw a single card from the action deck for regular firearms, and two cards if the weapon has a template effect (like a SBAC) or is a Heavy Weapon.

If any card comes up a black numbered one, the machinery is hit. Add a token to the repairer's pile. A black face card means 2 markers must be added. If the number of tokens exceeds 15, the machinery is too badly damaged to repair—the characters will need to devise a new plan. For this reason, it may prove necessary for the technician to spend his time making Repair rolls.

SBACula: See page 159.

Zombie Grenadier: See page 160.

Zombies (2 per hero): See page 159.

CALLING HOME

Once the radio transmitter is repaired, the Knights can call home and report on the situation. Once they've told their story, read the following text to the group.

"Roger. We confirm loss of Prophet and request for immediate evacuation. An Angel is on its way. Get yourselves to the top of the tallest building in the city. You'll be picked up from there. Repeat. The streets are deemed to be unsafe. Get to high ground and await rendezvous. Wait just a second..."

"Command has ordered you to ensure your primary mission is complete. I repeat, your primary mission must be complete. Secure specimen for evacuation with you."

SURVIVORS

Whether the Knights are en route to the tallest building in the city or have lost the radio station and are simply moving on in search of new hunting grounds, the Knight who earlier heard voices over his headset communicator now hears the same voice again, only this time it's clearer.

"Hello? Is there anybody there? Please help us. We're under attack. Junction of Leo V and 11th."

Trying to respond is unsuccessful. It's up to the characters if they want to investigate or not. Using the remaining street signs, the Knights know they are on Lando and 14th.

Being of circular design, most cities use the same naming convention. Streets which follow the concentric shape of the city use numbers. The lower the number, the nearer it is to the center.

Avenues, known as spokes, radiate outward in straight lines. These are named after popes of old. Traditionally, all papal names used must correspond to the order the popes sat on the throne, and naming runs clockwise. Thus, if a city wants to use Pope Jean-Paul I as a spoke name, the clockwise spoke must be Jean-Paul II (his antecedent), while the one anti-clockwise (assuming Jean-Paul I isn't the first spoke used) would be Paul VI (his predecessor).

THE SURVIVORS' STORY

Since this city follows the traditional procedure, the group needs to head three streets toward the city center and three spokes across.

The Knights don't have to respond in order to complete their mission. They may believe the signal is a trap, or that it's an old recording. The survivors will eventually be rescued, though they'll be fewer in number, and the characters will have to live with the fact they didn't follow up the signals and help save lives.

FIREFIGHT

The voice belongs to one of a group of survivors. They've spent the last decade eking out a living, surviving on canned food well past its use by date, and sneaking around to avoid the Rephaim. Unfortunately, a roving Rephaim patrol has discovered one of their hideouts, one crammed with woman and children, and are launching an attack. Knowing they can't let the women and children be captured, the menfolk are prepared to sell their lives dearly.

As the heroes approach, they hear the distinctive sounds of SBAC fire echoing through the streets, as well as blasts from shotguns (the militia looted sporting goods stores).

Use the **Street by Street** map from *Necropolis 2350* (but without the tanks and enemy placement markers) to get the basic layout. Scatter copious amounts of rubble around. The citizens are sheltering behind a makeshift barricade of barrels and rubble (Armor +4) which have been placed to block off the lower crossroads and turn it into a fort.

The militia is inside the fort. Half the regular zombies and two grenadiers are approaching from the north, and begin 16" away. The remaining zombies are split between the east and west roads leading to the crossroads, and start 12" away. Two snipers have taken up position inside one of the buildings—it doesn't matter which one, so long as they have line of sight to the barricade. The Knights begin at the southern end of the map.

Because of the militia's very limited amount of ammunition, each player should keep a very careful track of the ammo level of the militia he controls during the fight. Each pair begins at High ammo level. Afterward, the militia loot fallen zombies for their SMGs.

Militia (2 per hero): See page 157.

Zombie Grenadiers (2): See page 160.

Zombies (4 per hero): See page 159.

Zombie Snipers (2): See page 160.

After the rescue, the "headman," Jeff Koenig, approaches the Knights and introduces himself. There's no set way Koenig feels about the Knights. GMs can either pick his attitude, determine it randomly, or let the experience of the players (not the characters) determine his mood.

If the players are experienced gamers, Koenig should be hostile—this creates more opportunities for roleplaying. If they're new to gaming, have Koenig friendly—it encourages the players to roleplay, rather than forcing it on them by having a confrontation.

Alternately, roll on the Reaction Table to determine Koenig's initial feelings toward the group (and the Ordines in general). This should come across in his greeting—he's either going to be rude, apathetic, or friendly. The heroes get a single Persuasion roll to alter his mood, if they so wish. Once his final mood is determined, read the relevant section below.

HOSTILE/UNCOOPERATIVE

After introducing himself he invites the group to follow him down a manhole. Clambering down the ladder, the Knights find themselves in an old cistern. It's now a slum, the sides supporting makeshift shelters. The stench is sickening, as are the appalling conditions in which the citizens live. Woman, children, and babies huddle in the shadows, clutching their few meager possessions. Any Knight with Healing has the opportunity to treat some minor injuries and infections.

There's an air of resentment simmering in the air. The citizens aren't stupid enough to attack the Knights, but they may spit or curse at them for abandoning them.

"You see how we've had to live since the Ordines abandoned us here?" Koenig shouts. "We've lived like rats in these stinking tunnels! Disease and starvation have claimed God knows how many lives! Why didn't you come back? Why didn't you check there weren't any more survivors being you upped and left? Damn it, we've been sending out radio broadcasts every time we hear a Dropship, but no, you're too busy fighting your war to worry about the citizens! For the love of God, you abandoned us to the Rephaim!"

Koenig is willing to cooperate with the Knight only so far as being shown to the pickup point. He won't obey orders, nor will the citizens, and they don't benefit from any Lead-

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ership Edges in combat. Throughout the rest of the adventure Koenig snaps at any Knights who try to placate him, calling them cowards and traitors to humanity.

NEUTRAL

As above, except the citizens fall into two camps. The first are afraid of the Knights, sheltering in their ramshackle shelters and peering out through racks. The second camp is more open, but lacks any feelings toward the Knights—a decade of deprivation has less them shell-shocked and without much faith in the Ordines.

"So you finally turned up, eh?" Koenig says. "Took your time, but I guess we should be grateful. I guess those radio broadcasts finally got through to someone. I take it you've got a plan to get us out of here? My people have spent ten years in this hell hole living like rats just to stay alive. It's a damned miracle we survived at all!"

Koenig follows any orders, but only so long as he doesn't feel the Knight are placing his people in danger. None of the citizens are willing to risk their lives now they're so close to rescue, but they'll fight if there is no other option.

The citizens don't have a huge supply of drugs or bandages available, but they provide basic first aid to wounded heroes. Each Knight benefits from a single Healing d6 attempt (they have other sick and injured to attend to, so can't spare the time or resources for further rolls).

FRIENDLY/HELPFUL

As Hostile/Uncooperative, except the citizens are pleased to see the Knights. The wretches paw at them, thanking them profusely for rescuing them.

"You have no idea how good it is to see you guys!" Koenig beams. "We've been here since the evacuation. We got cut off and bid out until the relief column came, but it never did. Before we knew it the city was abandoned and we were here to stay. A few groups tried to make it out on foot or in vehicles, but no one ever came back to rescue us. We figured they'd failed to reach the border. So we've lived like rats for ten years, scavenging canned food from wrecked shops, drinking rainwater, and trying to avoid detection."

"I tell you, bad you arrived in the first year after we went underground we'd likely have killed you in anger. But time's a great healer. We realize now we had our chance to escape, and bad you known we were here you'd have been back in force to rescue us. A few went bad and started beretrical preaching. As much it shames me to say it, we dealt with them in accordance with the law. Still, I'm sure we'd all appreciate absolution for our sins if you've got a Chaplain to band."

"We've got an old radio, but it hasn't got much range. Sometimes we hear Dropships overheard, so we try to call for help. So far everyone's ignored us. If you're getting pulled out, you've got to take the women and children at least. They can't stay here—it's too dangerous and too damned undignified."

If the heroes had to abandon the radio station before broadcasting a distress call, the citizens' radio set is a battered backpack radio. It needs repairs (Repair roll at -2) before it can communicate with the Preceptory. Otherwise, it's just a headset communicator they scavenged off a fallen Knight during the invasion.

Koenig works with the Knights to get the survivors ready to move out. If the Knights don't advise them to leave behind any non-essential goods, Koenig does so.

The citizens provide healing as above, except they roll a d8+2 Healing (they're willing to provide better aid, albeit at the expense of their own people). Any character succeeding in a Notice roll before he receives first aid detects civilians in need of dire medical aid, and can refuse to be treated.

A POTENTIAL DISASTER

Assuming the Knights contacted the Preceptory, they know there's a single Angel en route to rescue them. An Angel can hold 18 Knights in full combat gear, or 36 passengers for a short and very crowded flight. At a push, you can cram 50 into the hold, but that generates weight problems and makes the Angel extremely hard to handle—few pilots will fly with such a load.

The number of civilians comes to 18 children (all below the age of 14), 22 women, and 20 men (after any losses in the battle are accounted for), or 60 in total—far too many for a single Angel, even operating in emergency conditions.

Unless the Knights head back to the radio transmitter and summon a second Angel, folks are going to be left behind on the first run. Do **not** remind the heroes of this—the players have access to the Angel stats in the *Necropolis 2350* campaign guide, and they can always ask the GM (you should tell them the cold, hard facts) if unsure about the maximum load.

FIGHTING MEN

The count of 20 male survivors takes into account any slain in the previous battle. In later battles, there are always 2 militiamen per hero. Any casualties are replaced from the extra men, but only to a maximum of 20. For instance, if there are six Knights, the number of militia aiding them at any one time equals 12. This leaves 8 spare men to replace casualties.

LAST STAND

The tallest buildings left standing are in the inner residential district. Once the penthouses of the elite, they are now shattered ruins. Many have been gutted by fire or are so badly damaged they are in danger of collapse, but one has remained remarkably intact. By the time the Knights reach the foyer, the Dropship is only minutes away.

If you want detailed floorplans, look no further than **12 to Midnight's Modern Floorplans: High-Rise Building**.

FOYER

The only entrance to the tower not clogged by debris is the main foyer. The Rephaim use the building as a base, and there are a large number of them in the building. Fortunately, there is only a handful of zombies guarding the entrance.

The foyer measures 24" by 36". Like most foyers in 21st century high-rise buildings, it contains a reception desk, seating areas, snack machines (all empty), stairwells, and elevators. Spread the zombies out around the foyer, ensuring none are closer than 15" to the entrance. The Knights begin outside the main doors.

The militia only joins the battle without being ordered if Koenig was Friendly or Helpful. A Neutral reaction means they are content to let the Knights do the fighting unless given a direct order. Hostile or Uncooperative citizens

lend support only if the Knights are in serious trouble or the woman and children are threatened.

With no power, the elevators don't work. The only way to reach the roof is to climb the 30 flights of stairs! Although the passage of so many feet alerts the Rephaim to the humans' presence, they are too slow to react. Unless the characters go looking for trouble, they can reach the rooftop without further incident.

Militia (2 per hero): See page 157.

Zombie Grenadier: See page 160.

Zombies (2 per hero): See page 159.

ROOFTOP RESCUE

As the heroes reach the top of the high-rise, the Angel pilot contacts them to alert them to his imminent arrival. There isn't room for him to land on the roof, and he can't guarantee the structure will take the weight, so he plans to drop the ramp and hover just off to one side. All the Knights have to do is hop onboard. If a second Angel hasn't been summoned, the pilot calls for emergency support as soon as he learns there are citizens present.

The Rephaim, however, aren't going to let the humans escape that easily. A small force of zombies has managed to shamble up the stairwell and onto the roof. As the first Angel takes up position, they emerge from the stairwell and open fire. The Angel pilot won't depart to provide air support—he's focused on saving as many civilians as possible. Should the Knights have let the Preceptory know about the survivors, the second Angel provides air support using its guns (and only its guns) until the first one has picked up its cargo and bugged out.

At the end of each round, after all other actions are taken, the GM must roll 2d6 to determine how many citizens have climbed into the Angel. Remember, there are a total of 40 women and children. Once this number is reached, the pilot closes the ramp and departs. The Knights and the menfolk will have to hold out for another hour (if only one Dropship is present) or wait 1d6 rounds while the second Angel takes up position.

Regardless of Koenig's attitude, his men stand and fight while the women and children board the Angel. However, if the headman was Hostile or Uncooperative he and his men still don't benefit from Leadership Edges—they're not fighting with the Knights, they're fighting purely for their families.

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The roof measures 24" by 36". The Angel's ramp touches down in the center of the northern edge of the map. Aside from a few vents and satellite dishes, there is little cover on the roof. The Rephaim begin 8" from the southern edge.

Militia (2 per hero): See page 157.

Zombies (3 per hero): See page 159.

AFTERMATH

Assuming the citizens are rescued, the Ordines launch a determined effort to locate any others. The GM can allow this task to fall to other Lances and fall into the background, or he can create an adventure (or a mini-campaign) where the Knights get to go back to Olisipo, liberate more survivors, and combat more Rephaim.

Word of the survivors soon circulates to the media. Friendly citizens praise the Ordines, specifically the Knights, for coming to their rescue, and dismiss any claims that the decade long wait was excessive. Hostile citizens, on the other hand, use the opportunity to criticize the Ordines (but not the Church) for leaving them behind. Any Knight who offended the civilians gets a special mention. This may lead to repercussions, and possibly earn the Knight a place on a Preacher-run training course on handling civilians in stressful situations. Whatever the outcome, the media wants to speak with the Knights about their role in the affair.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

This adventure should take two sessions to play out. Knights who failed to grab a live specimen in the first session should earn no more than 2 Experience Points—they've failed their mission. If they don't manage to capture one in the second session *or* fail to rescue the survivors, they again shouldn't be given more than 2 XPs. Should they manage to fail the primary mission *and* screw up the rescue attempt, the GM should consider rewarding them with a single XP.

A CARDINAL ERROR

In this adventure, the Knights must rescue a cardinal from his captors. Although the mission briefing mentions separatist guerillas, the kidnappers are in fact Rephaim, seeking to convert the cardinal into a greater mummy.

BRIEFING

Begin by reading or paraphrasing the information in Handout #2 to the players. When you're done, give them a copy of the handout to use during the adventure.

WMs should ensure the Knights aren't issued with any heavy support or explosive weapons. As far as the Sacri Ordines are concerned, the mission is a rescue operation, not an assault. When things go badly wrong, as they will, the Knights will lack heavy firepower, forcing them to use whatever they have to hand to win the day.

The second Lance accompanying the Knights comprises as many members as there are player characters, with one notable exception—if you have more than six players, you're likely running two Lances anyway. In this instance, there is no support—the mission is for two Lances only. Ideally, each player has two characters—his Wild Card and an Extra.

The second Lance *must* include a Senior Knight, who is second-in-command of the operation, and a Combat Medic. Beyond that, the *players* should decide their comrade's specialties. In accordance with the mission briefing, only flechette SMGs and limited types of grenades are available to their support crew. Hand out Ally Sheets as appropriate.

REPLACEMENT CHARACTERS

Should a Wild Card character be incapacitated or killed during the mission, the first player to lose his character promotes the second Senior Knight (an Extra) to Wild Card status (assuming he's alive, of course). Otherwise, a player can promote any Extra Knight to replace their fallen Wild Card.

The newly promoted character doesn't gain any advances, though—he just has a Wild Die and three wound levels. This means he's much weaker than the hero he is replacing.

Once all the Extras are used up in this manner, there are no more replacements or reinforcements available—the players are going have to be more careful with their men in future.

When the mission ends, the player is free to generate a new character as normal. Any XPs the player earns during this adventure are carried forward to his replacement character so he doesn't lose out.

PLANS AND TACTICS

The Lances are carried to the forward base by Angel. As the heroes disembark, they are greeted by the local Preceptor Master, his Preceptor Intelligence Officer, and a Church bureaucrat—Nuncia Petra Chang of the Office of Corporate Liaison.

The Master greets welcomes the Knights to the base, introduces his two comrades, and ushers the Lances straight to the rooms set aside for them.

"We've set aside a tactical operation center and two barrack rooms for you," the Preceptor Master explains on the short journey across the air strip. "Our intelligence resources are at your disposal."

"Nuncia Chang," he continues, blatantly ignoring the woman, "has been appointed to ensure you don't stray over the border and create a diplomatic incident. Apparently your target is very close to Kobia, and the Union has forbidden flights over their territory. We'd like you to make our lives easier by remembering that."

Once in the tactical center, the PIO calls up a large aerial view of the monastery. The WM should use the information below to create a map of the monastery, which comprises six main buildings. The plateau on which the compound lies should measure no more than 24" long and 20" wide.



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"Sorry we didn't have this information available earlier, but the monastery has been abandoned for some years and records were few and far between.

"Right, here's the general layout," he says, pointing to the map. "Every building is constructed from stone quarried on the site. All doors, interior and exterior, are wooden. There's no mains electricity to the site, though there's every chance the kidnappers have installed a generator.

"The large building in the lower right corner is the old church. It's been deconsecrated, so don't worry about spilling blood inside. Up from that are two linked buildings. The large is the old library, and the smaller one the scriptorium, where the monks copied out books by hand.

"In the far northeast is the elevator. It's the only regular way in and out of the compound. Left of the library is the main accommodation block and refectory, with a small kitchen attached. This is the only two-story building—accommodation downstairs, and the refectory on the upper floor. The last building was a storehouse for provisions. The short lengths of wall you can see are about three feet high."

No interior blueprints are available, so the Knights have only limited tactical data.

The PIO then asks the Knights to apprise him of their plan. He'll offer tactical advice where necessary. The players should be given the opportunity to plan the rescue to suit their characters' strengths.

The WM should use the PIO to help the Knights if they get stuck, or they devise a risky strategy—such as both Lances landing in the same place (creating a kill-zone for the enemy) or having the Knights search the buildings one at a time, rather than performing a blanket sweep as quickly as possible (thus allowing the kidnappers chance to eliminate their hostages).

THE MISSION

The defenders comprise a number of zombies and a greater mummy. Aside from the mummy, who is in the church completing the ritual to turn the cardinal into a greater mummy, and his bodyguard of four zombies, the location of the defenders is left to the WM.

No more than four zombies should be on guard duty outside the buildings—the mummy doesn't know his headquarters has been

located by the Ordines, and he doesn't want to reveal his presence by having his minions shambling around in the open for too long.

Since flechette weapons are silent and zombies don't make a great deal of noise, the Knights alert the other defenders only if grenades are used or they make excessive noise (such as shouting and screaming). If they can keep quiet, they stand a very good chance of catching the Rephaim by surprise.

Of course, that's if they can approach the monastery without being spotted. Cherubs have stealth systems designed to fool sensors and visual observations, but they aren't foolproof. As the Cherubs approach, have the outside guards make a Group Notice roll at -4—the heat dampers on the Cherubs are just as effective against Rephaim thermal vision. With success, the zombies alert their master, who in turn gives his troops orders. The heroes are ambushed as they land. Check for Surprise as normal. On a failure, the zombies react to the presence of the Cherubs only once the Knights disembark.

COMPLICATIONS

Few *Necropolis 2350* missions don't have some sort of complication, and this one is no exception. First, Cardinal Vespasian is beyond saving—he's already dead and most of the way to becoming a Rephaim. Second, unless the Knights stop the greater mummy from completing his ritual, the cardinal will arise as a greater mummy himself (albeit one with no Stygian armor or rune blade).

The mummy requires 10 rounds to complete his ritual. Place ten tokens out of sight of the players. The countdown begins as soon as the Knights touch down in the compound. Subtract one token for each round in which the mummy takes no actions beyond chanting and engraving eldritch runes on the corpse. When the last token is gone, the cardinal awakens at the start of the next round as a greater mummy (without Stygian armor or a rune blade).

The mummy is not suicidal, though, and will defend himself to the best of his ability. After all, once the pesky Knights are dead, he can continue his work in peace. He'll also have new corpses to replace any losses to his forces.

The cardinal's retinue is also deceased. The mummy tortured them in front of the cardinal to assist in breaking his mind ready for his transformation. Their corpses are in the church.

Greater Mummy: See page 158.

Zombies (3 per Knight): See page 159.

Zombie Grenadiers (1 per 2 Knights): See page 160.

AFTERMATH

The heroes had no hope of rescuing the cardinal—he died a long time ago. Although the populace is rightfully disgusted at the images beamed into their homes, the success of the Knights gives them courage, and reminds them there are men and women who have dedicated their lives to combating evil.

The Pope makes a rare televised appearance, in which he exhorts the citizens of Salus to be eternally vigilant against the horrors of the Rephaim, and to report any suspected heretical activity to the authorities immediately. Enlistment figures for the Sacri Ordines rise 4% over the next few months, as brave citizens sign up to fight the good fight.

SHORT TALES

The following adventures are less detailed and involved than those above. They could be used as mini-adventures, perhaps for when the group is missing a player, as additional scenes in a larger scenario, or when the GM doesn't have anything planned for the session.

HOLY ORDERS

The Knights are given a shot at TV fame—for two minutes, anyway. Due to a bureaucratic error, the Knights are ordered to sell memorabilia on the weekly *Ordo Night* show. This isn't a very long adventure, and is intended as a light-hearted break from the usual bloody carnage the heroes must endure most missions. Given its nature, the WM can reuse it over and over again.

BRIEFING

"Knights, some bureaucrat has boned and dumped you right in it. In exactly 20 minutes, the weekly Ordo Night where we get chance to sell Sacer Ordo memorabilia to the masses goes live. I don't know how it happened, but your Lance has been put

down as the presenters for part of this week's show, which is being broadcast from this Preceptory.

"I only just found out myself, and we don't have time to correct the error. You're each going to have to go on live television for two minutes and sell something to the masses.

"While you might get the bright idea to kill me and get an instant transfer to the Penitents, it won't work—you'll still have to go on live television first."

Enemy Forces: *Only a few hundred million viewers whose money we want.*

Support: *Sorry, but you have to handle this on your own. I could try ordering an air strike on the studio, but the odds of that coming off are slim.*

Equipment: *You'll be issued a microphone by the sound crew and given makeup, but that's your lot.*

THE MISSION

Before you run this mission, gather as many props as there are players. Yes, even Chaplains have been roped into the mess.

The Sacri Ordines sell mugs and pens bearing their symbol, signed photos of heroic Knights, model tanks, and such like. Just think of a modern home shopping channel, only with a militant bent. Your house should have plenty of props.

Give each player an actual prop he can hold and wave around, describe it in terms of how it looks in the 24th century (which is pretty much as today, only with the markings of the Sacer Ordo), and give them some time to think about their sales jargon. Remind them this is live television, as well—swearing will not go down well!

When they're all ready, give each player *exactly* two minutes to "sell" his item to an audience of around 300 million eager shoppers. When the clock gets to 10 seconds, hold up your fingers and silently count down, to give the Knight chance to close his slot.

Every player who at least makes an effort to roleplay should be awarded an Experience Point. Anyone who really gets into the roleplaying should be awarded an extra XP. Very kind WM's may wish to increase a Knight's Charisma by +1 when dealing with Church civilians for the next few missions because of the momentary fame they gain.

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A Knight who really gets into the swing of his sales pitch may be invited back again for another slot. This is a perfect excuse for him or her to take the Media Star Edge, and is well suited to Knights whose specialty is talking rather than killing.

WALKING THE BEAT

This is a hearts-and-minds mission and is centered more on roleplaying than combat. It's a chance for the Knights to meet common citizens and interact with them. It's also chance for the WM to be creative, and design his own encounters.

BRIEFING

"A neighboring Preceptory has been ordered to send troops to the frontline. They're pulling out their rearguard as well, so you lot have been assigned to perform policing duties in their local town. This is a hearts-and-minds operation, so we expect politeness and smiles at all times. Don't get yourselves on the local news and don't screw up relations with our neighbors!"

Enemy Forces: *Aside from potential cultists and criminal elements, the town is safe.*

Support: *You won't need any support for this mission. If an old lady attacks you, I'm sure you'll deal with her. You'll be airlifted in and then left to patrol on foot. The boss wants face-to-face contact, not you lot buddled in a Prophet.*

Equipment: *Just your regular gear. Take your shields as well, though. Apparently there have been riots recently.*

THE MISSION

Rather than tell you how to roleplay this mission, we've provided a sample list of encounters. After the Knights have walked the beat and chatted with a few passing citizens, draw a card. Repeat this as often as you want. This mission can be used several times by replacing used encounters with the WM's own ideas.

Only basic information has been given, leaving the WM and players to handle the actual social interaction in any way they see fit. There are a number of street maps in *Necropolis* the WM can use as needed.

2 **Bank Robbery:** The heroes blunder across a robbery in progress. There are four robbers and all begin rushing from the bank, firing as they leave. Stats are provided on page 158.

3 **Rescue My Cat:** A small child stops the Knights and asks them to rescue her cat, which is up a tree. The "cat" is in fact a Salusian bobcat, a notoriously vicious breed similar in size to a dog. It doesn't want to be rescued. Treat as a dog (see *Savage Worlds*), but add Climbing d8 and swap Bite for Claws).

4 **Forgetful Old Lady:** An elderly lady asks the Knights for help. She's a little senile and has forgotten where she lives. Investigation and Streetwise rolls may be handy here. She also thinks one of the Knights is her grandson. When they eventually find her apartment, she invites them in for tea and cake, and then proceeds to pull out the old family photo albums.

5 **Stop, Thief:** While passing through the local market, the Knights hear a hue and cry. A young urchin has stolen some fruit and is making a break for it. Use the Chase rules. The chase begins at Medium Range. As it is market day, the place is crowded and counts as Thick Obstacles. The youth, a starving lad with a sick mother and no father, has Agility d8. Otherwise treat him as a civilian.

6 **Old Veteran:** A one-legged, drunken man clad in foul-smelling rags bumps into the Knights. He immediately tells them how he is a wounded veteran and wants to swap war stories. Refusal leads to loud cries of how the Sacri Ordines neglect their wounded heroes which generates sneers and foul-looks from passersby. Acceptance leads to some rather dubious stories with lots of obvious contradictions. The man is, in fact, a fake—he's just the town drunk.

7 **New Arrival:** A breathless man runs up to the Knights and explains his wife is having a baby but something is wrong. A Healing roll reveals the woman has internal bleeding and needs surgery immediately. Calling for an ambulance will take too long, so the man suggests the Knights commandeer a car. Time for some roleplaying as both parents-to-be ask if everything is going to be okay and if the Knights could drive a little faster. At the hospital, the baby is delivered, the

DANGEROUS SECRET: PROJECT LAZARUS

Mankind's mortal life has always been relatively short. Even during the height of Corporate power, when anti-aging treatments were popular with the rich and famous, life expectancy only crept up to around 150 years. Since the Corporate War ended, research into longevity has been all but ignored.

It doesn't take a prophet to work out that mankind is losing the numbers war. It takes 16 years for a baby to reach the age it can be trained for war (within acceptable moral guidelines), and in the time it takes an infant to reach adulthood, countless soldiers will have been killed or maimed in the fighting. On the other hand, every dead human is a potential recruit for the Rephaim.

While the Church has not advocated forced insemination (yet), the Lazarites have taken the first steps down a dark road into closing the numbers gap. Since there is no way to speed up human development, the answer is to create a better soldier, one more resistant to damage.

Twenty years ago, a Lazarite investigation team discovered the wreck of a starship, the *Demeter*, which crashed on Salus before the outbreak of World War III. Amid the corrupted data files in the ship's computer, they retrieved the transcribed fragments of a diary dating back to the turn of the 20th century.

The diary, written by one Xavier Jahrling, told of how, in ages past, a group of men and women battled fell creatures of the night. It told of a procedure for grafting body parts from these night fiends onto human flesh, which was used to strengthen their warriors. The diary was dismissed as nonsense, perhaps part of a novel kept in the ship's library system, until it eventually came to the attention of Lazarite Dr. Johannes Weissman.

For over a decade, Weissman studied the diary in untold depth, reading, rereading, analyzing, and hypothesizing. At last he reached a startling conclusion—the medical procedures the diary described were not fiction.

Using members of the Penitents deemed irredeemable and Rephaim captives, Weissman has performed his own experiments—Rephaim limbs, tissue, and organs have been surgically implanted into and onto human bodies. Initial tests have had mixed results. In a few rare cases the graft has taken, resulting in what Weissman calls a "super soldier." In most cases, however, the subjects go insane and commit suicide. A few become psychotic, and must be given, to use the Church euphemism, "the final rest."

Live-fire tests using the human subjects are conducted under close guard by Lazarite forces. As with many Lazarite projects public knowledge of the Lazarus experiments would result in a fierce backlash against the Church.

mother saved, and the new child named after whichever character was the most friendly to the couple.

- 8 **I Want to Join:** A spotty-faced youth of around 17 years approaches the Knights and says he wants to enlist. It's obvious from a glance the kid wouldn't last a day as a Squire, but he's ultra-keen. Can they talk him out of it or will they sign up obvious meat for the grinder?

- 9 **Broken Vow:** The local Preceptor Estate Manager contacts the squad via radio and asks them to raid a suspected brothel. All goes well, but when checking the id of the clients they discover a Knight Commander on leave from a neighboring Preceptory. Although he has broken the

vow of celibacy, he outranks the heroes. Will they arrest him or use his predicament to earn future favors?

- 10 **Car Crash:** Two cars collide at a busy intersection. No one is hurt, but the drivers (treat as Citizens) begin arguing over who is to blame. While they stand and rant, traffic backs up in all directions and the drivers quickly start to honk their horns and demand the blockage is cleared. This could turn ugly.

- Jack** **I'll Jump:** A crowd has gathered at the base of a tall building. A lone figure can be seen on a window ledge ten stories up. The man, an accountant whose wife has left him for a fitness instructor named Hans, is threatening to jump.

NECROPOLIS 2350 ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM

Queen Rats: Recent rains have flooded the sewers and storm drains, forcing a swarm of rats into the streets. Hungry and vicious, the swarm is treated as a Wild Card. There are 2d10 innocent citizens in the street when the rats surge forth, which may hamper attempts to use grenades. Of course, destruction of public property (such as parked cars) or injuring citizens gets very bad press.

King Angry Mob: An angry mob is protesting at recent tax increases. There are 30 citizens (see *Necropolis*), half of whom are armed with rocks (Range: 3/6/12, Str+d4) and makeshift clubs (Str+d4). Forceful behavior in breaking up the mob leads to a barrage of stones followed by a clubbing. Intimidation and Persuasion are useful, though getting the entire mob to calm down should involve a -4 penalty (better that it's roleplayed).

Ace Monster: A hysterical woman comes running out of an apartment block screaming blue murder. She claims, through her sobs, that some sort of Rephaim beast is in her apartment. Such talk quickly draws a large crowd. The monster is nothing more than a large, albino rat. Catching it without tearing up the apartment won't be easy.

Joker Double Trouble: Life is rarely kind. Two encounters occur simultaneously. Draw two cards. Each demands attention, possibly forcing the Knights to divide their forces.

Enemy Forces: *We have no idea what you'll be facing, but we suspect a large number of hostiles must be involved.*

Support: *You'll be dropped in by Angel, along with a half-strength Lance of Sergeants and three Preacher Knight Combat Medics. If the situation is really bot, call for backup and we'll send what we can.*

Equipment: *Grab your regular gear and mount up—we've got friendlies in trouble!*

THE MISSION

Use the map from **Fliegerkopf** (see *Necropolis 2350*) for this mission.

The facility is, in fact, a top secret Lazarite research base linked to the Crypt and Project Lazarus (p. 15). A Lance of Knights stationed there underwent alteration, being grafted with Rephaim tissue and organs. Unfortunately, the guinea pigs went insane and turned on their keepers, slaughtering them and accidentally starting the fire, which has, of course, destroyed all of the research notes.

As the dropship approaches the base, the heroes can clearly see the main building is completely alight. There are signs of movement on the ground, but the smoke makes it difficult to determine who or what, the figures are. Unwilling to land his bird in the smoke-filled compound, the dropship pilot touches down 30" off the eastern edge of the map. The Angel remains there until called.

No sooner have the heroes touched down than they come under fire from the insane Knights, who are gathered around the building. The Knights scream and bay continually, as the necromantic energy in their grafts destroys their minds. The heroes cannot communicate with them.

There is one insane Knight per hero and all are Wild Cards. Pick any from the list below, using duplicates if necessary. All of the enemy Knights are berserk, as per the Edge.

If the WM wishes to be cruel, he can have one of the Knights be a former comrade of at least one hero. The Knight was a regular petty rule-breaker, and was sentenced to a year in the Penitents to straighten him out. He was listed as missing in action 18 months ago. Seeing him requires a Guts check to avoid the effects of Fear.

* **Insane Knight Infantryman #1:** His skin is covered in patches of zombie flesh, granting him +2 Toughness for Toughness

WHAT PRICE VICTORY?

The heroes stumble across a secret Lazarite project while on a rescue mission. Hopefully, the revelation of the Lazarites' activities will cause a crisis of faith. Surely victory cannot come at any price?

BRIEFING

"Sorry to call you away from prayer, but we have an emergency situation just developed. An Angel pilot returning from a drop reported seeing fire from a small facility about 50 miles from here. By the will of God, he picked up a radio mayday from the base. We have no idea who they are or what is attacking them, but these are fellow Knights in need of help. We're the closest Preceptory, so we're going in."

13 (6).

- * **Insane Knight Infantryman #2:** His hands end in the gnarled claws of a ghoul, giving him Str+d4 and the Paralysis special ability with a successful claw attack.
- * **Insane Knight Infantryman #3:** His internal organs have been replaced with those of a zombie. He has the Undead special ability.
- * **Insane Knight Infantryman #4:** Has the wings of a winged zombie attached to him (Flying Pace 6).
- * **Insane Knight Infantryman #5:** Has vampires' teeth, causing Str+d8 damage with a successful bite attack.
- * **Insane Knight Infantryman #6:** Has the wrappings of a mummy grafted to his flesh. He has the Arcane Resistance Edge.

Knight Combat Medics (3): See page 157.

Sergeants (5): See page 158.

REMOVING THE EVIDENCE

After stopping the Knights, the heroes can examine the extent of their surgical alteration—this requires a Guts roll to avoid Fear. None of the Knights have any ID tags, nor do they wear any unit insignia. A number of other bodies lying outside the burning building, however, wear the distinctive black armor of Lazarites.

Suddenly, an aircraft screams overhead at just a few hundred feet. The heroes recognize it as a Scourge bomber, an aircraft loaded with napalm. As they watch, it commences a slow turn, setting itself up for an attack run. The heroes have just a few rounds to flee in whatever direction they want before the Scourge delivers its deadly load. Deal initiative cards as normal (including one to the aircraft).

Signaling the Scourge has no effect—the Lazarite pilot has strict orders to cleanse the area, regardless of who may be alive down there.

The Knights' dropship *won't* open fire on the bomber, but it is available to airlift the heroes to safety. It takes one round to lift off, one round to move over to the characters' location, and can begin loading on the third round (which might prove rather fatal). Alternately, the Knights can run to the dropship, but unless they are close to it, the odds of reaching it safely within 3 rounds are not good.

On the Scourge's third action card, it releases all four napalm canisters into the base simultaneously. Position the chains side by side to cover as much of the base as possible. Roll for deviation for each canister separately.

Moments after the Scourge delivers its deadly cargo, two Angel dropships with Lazarite markings supported by a pair of Archangel assault ships fly into view from the smoke and flame.



NECROPOLIS 2350 ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM

Should the heroes be hiding and the Angel well out of sight, they see a Lance of Lazarites in infantry battle suits climb out of the dropships (once they land) and begin examining the area. After about ten minutes, they withdraw to the dropships hauling the corpses with them. The dropships then leave. There is no evidence, other than the heroes' testimony, linking the Lazarites to the site.

If the heroes are in the open (or later reveal themselves) or the Angel is nearby, the characters are ordered, over their headset radios, to drop their weapons and surrender or face the consequences. Having an Angel nearby is a clear sign someone is in the base! The Archangels attack the heroes with guns and rockets if they do not comply within 3 rounds, but cease fire once the Lance surrenders. They only attack the Angel if the characters start running toward it.

Assuming they value their lives and comply, both Angels land, each disgorging a Lance of Knights in full infantry battle suits and armed with hand flamers. They take up positions surrounding the characters.

A female Lazarite, wearing medium armor, then climbs out from one of the dropships and approaches the heroes. Any Lazarite heroes in the party can make a Common Knowledge roll. Other characters require the Knowledge (Sacri Ordines) skill to recognize her, and even then the roll is made at -2. With success, they recognize her as Field Master Amy Wheeler, the senior Lazarite in this sector and a close friend of Grand Master O'Flaherty.

She studies the heroes carefully for a few moments, memorizing their faces, before speaking.

"Whatever you thought happened here didn't. Whatever you think you saw, you were mistaken. This was an attack by Rephaim on a Lazarite holding facility, nothing more. By the time you got here, everyone was dead. Then we arrived to take care of our dead. If you fail to understand this and report otherwise, you will regret your foolishness. Don't speak, just nod if you understand."

She waits to see nods before she continues speaking.

"Good, now get out of here while I'm still feeling benevolent!"

She then departs back into the dropship, while her men check over the base as detailed above. Just in case the heroes think of getting

itchy trigger fingers, the Lazarites only move away from the characters once Wheeler is safely in the air.

If they refuse to comply, they have signed their own death warrants. The Assault Knights open fire with their flamers! Run the combat as normal. Cleaning up the aftermath if the heroes win should make for interesting gaming, and even if they lose the WM has an adventure hook to hand—a Lance is sent out to discover how the previous Knights died.

Should the heroes decide to tell anyone the truth of what happened here, they should come to regret it. They may find themselves on the receiving end of an artillery "miscalculation," being "accidentally" targeted by a Lazarite Lance during a joint mission, or even being temporarily reassigned to serve alongside Lazarites, during which time they receive the most suicidal missions. No, it isn't fair, but the heroes were clearly warned to keep quiet and the Lazarites aren't all that nice, really. If they want to investigate further more covertly, the WM has a plot hook already lined up.

Lazarites (12): As Knight Assault (page 156).

Field Master Wheeler: See page 157

FURTHER ADVENTURES

This section provides a basic adventure generator for non-military missions, two alternate tables for the regular adventure generator, and a list of distractions the WM can use to make the Knights' lives more interesting.

NON-MILITARY MISSIONS

The Sacri Ordines of the Third Reformation Church are not just a military force. They own vast tracts of land, on which citizens live and work, and are responsible for policing their estates. All Knights are required to undertake regular police duties, both to give them a rest from battle and keep them in touch with the folk they are sworn to defend.

To create a non-military mission, simply roll 3d6 and consult the tables below. The WM assigns one die to each table as he desires to form the skeleton of the story. Once he knows the basics, he can begin designing scenes and encounters. WMs should also consider using the Complications and Distractions Tables (p. 21) to help develop the core idea.

Note that routine and petty crimes, such as burglaries, muggings, and assaults, are typically handled by Sergeants. Don't turn the game into a cop drama. Murder is a foul crime, but only when the victim is important or found in mysterious circumstances should the heroes become involved in the story.

TABLE 1: VILLAIN

This table determines the generic nature of the main villain. Additional details must be determined by the WM. Henchmen, soldiers, or fanatical followers can be added as the WM wishes—few villains work alone.

d6	Result
1	Bandits
2	Corporation
3	Criminals
4	Heretic
5	Psion
6	Rephaim

Bandits: Life on Salus is tough. Some bandits are nothing more than regular citizens driven to break the law to ensure their families are fed. Others choose a life of "freedom," taking what they need to survive from those weaker than themselves.

Corporation: Corporate activities in Church territory may be covert military operations, propaganda teams, or even media crews reporting things the Church would rather keep quiet.

Criminals: Although petty criminals are commonplace, catching a mugger or burglar isn't very heroic. This entry refers to organized criminals, whose activities include drug-running, smuggling, prostitution, selling blackmarket goods, and so on.

Heretics: Regardless of his heresy, the villain has turned his eyes away from the Church. He may be a "harmless" Pelagianist or a die-hard Necrolatrist.

Psion: A psion may be a rogue or, more rarely, a Corporate employee. For an extra twist, it may even be a Corporate deserter, which perhaps prompts a Corporate team to infiltrate Church territory in search of him.

Rephaim: Rephaim such mummies, vampires, changelings, wights, and other types capable of subversive activities are the best villains. Most often they lead a small cabal of lesser Rephaim or heretics.

TABLE 2: CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

This table highlights the general type of crime. Each category is deliberately wide in scope, so as to allow the WM greater freedom in picking the actual nature of the illegal activity.

Note that heresy is not a defined category. Depending on the adventure, heresy may fall into any category. For instance, an Immortalist may seek to sabotage or destroy Church property, whereas a Pelagianist might seek to corrupt others into following his creed.

d6	Result
1	Conquest
2	Corruption
3–4	Kidnapping/Theft
5	Sabotage/Destruction
6	Smuggling

Conquest: While conquest can refer to military activities (such as bandits seeking to capture a remote village), it can be used in other ways. Rival gangs seeking dominance of the local underworld through violence, using blackmail or threats to force someone into providing assistance, and even the rigging of elections all count as conquest crimes.

Corruption: The villain may be a drug-dealer, corrupting the flesh of his victims with narcotics, or a heretic corrupting the spirit with dangerous lies. It also covers crimes such as bribery and perjury. Alternately, the corruption may refer to anti-Church propaganda or attacks against a person's social and moral standing.

Kidnapping/Theft: Kidnap involves the capture of a person or persons, whereas theft is directed against an inanimate object. Persons may include sacrifices for ghastly rituals, hostages, important civic figures, or celebrities. Objects might be food stores, the contents of a bank vault, or top-secret plans. Tax evasion also falls under theft, as does embezzlement, espionage, fraud, and identity theft.

Sabotage/Destruction: Villains who seek to sabotage something want to cause a temporary breakdown. While this might refer to equipment or a building, such as a power station, the rail network, or even a hospital, it can also refer to society in general. Destruction, on the other hand, involves the permanent removal of something (and includes arson and murder). While a serious crime in itself, sabotage is the lesser of the two evils.

NECROPOLIS 2350 ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM

Smuggling: Almost anything can be found on the blackmarket. Anti-smuggling operations might involve drug-dealers, food hoarders, holy relic traffickers, gunrunners, Rephaim smugglers (bringing Rephaim into Church territory), or people smugglers (such as an underground railroad for Faithful who don't want to serve the Church or moving rogue psions or citizens who want to defect to the Union).

TABLE 3: LOCATION

This determines the general focus of activities in the mission. The WM may use the result as the entire setting, or perhaps just as the scene of the climax.

d6	Result
1	Building
2	Business
3	Church
4	Residential
5	Underground
6	Wilderness

Building: This covers important or interesting buildings, such as power stations, libraries, hospitals, media studios, broadcasting towers, museums, docks/transport hubs, schools, and storehouses.

Business: This generic category covers shops, office blocks, malls, factories, and the like. Some business may be a front for the villain, whereas others are the target of his nefarious plans.

Church: A catch-all category covering actual shrines, monasteries, churches, and cathedrals, as well as Curia offices and Preceptories. Typically, these structures are located in an urban environment, though some can be found in the Wilderness.

Residential: Includes towns and districts within cities. The exact type of area can range from the luxurious estates of the rich and powerful down to crowded slums and tenements. Villages typically come under Wilderness results, though larger or important villages may fall under the Residential category.

Wilderness: Although the wilderness might refer to a forest, swamp, or desert, it can also refer to rural farming communities or a small Preceptory office, as well as a remote outpost (such as a meteorological station, observatory, or monastery).

Underground: This locale might be a subway station or train, the sewers, a basement, a cyst, or even a cave system. All that matters is that it is located beneath the surface, away from prying eyes.

EXAMPLES

Example 1: *The dice come up 5, 5, and 5! The WM doesn't have any choice in assigning these. The results are Corporation, Sabotage/Destruction, and Wilderness. The WM decides a team of Corporate engineers and a few soldiers have captured and sabotaged a remote media relay station. Now, whenever the Church news comes on, the Corporates cut the feed and broadcast their own fake news stories.*

Example 2: *The dice are kinder this time and give us a 1, 2, and 4. The WM picks Psion (2), Corruption (1), and Church (4). The plot involves a rogue psion who uses puppet to dominate a local priest into giving heretical sermons. Although the priest appears initially to be the villain, the Knights must discover the true source of his corruption.*

Example 3: *Our final rolls are 2, 3, and 6. The WM selects Bandits (3), Smuggling (6), and Building (2). The WM decides to make this a moral issue for the Knights. The bandits, actually peasants, are workers at a Church granary complex, where they are involved smuggling much-needed food reserves to remote communities. They may be Robin Hood types, but they are still criminals in the eyes of Mother Church.*

ADVENTURE GENERATOR ADDITIONS

Below are optional tables. They are numbered in accordance with the *Necropolis 2350* tables they replace. Likewise, any references to other tables refer to those in the core setting book. You can use either these tables or the originals from *Necropolis 2350* to throw obstacles at the heroes.

TABLE 1: MISSION

This alternate table gives a quick overview of the heroes' mission, leaving the GM to fill in the details as he wishes.

d20	Result
-----	--------

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Battle! The Knights engage or are engaged by an enemy force. | 5 Bad intelligence (the objective is not where it should be, is heavily guarded, doesn't exist). |
| 2 Capture enemy fortification or settlement. | 6 Bad weather (-1 to all physical trait rolls due to weather). |
| 3 Capture important person (enemy leader) or information (battle plans). | 7 Communication failure leads to erroneous orders. |
| 4 Capture important terrain (ford, bridge, pass, hill). | 8 Mistaken identity (heroes misidentify objective, or allied troops attack them in error). |
| 5 Capture sentient prisoners for interrogation. | 9 Natural obstacle (impassable terrain, river) causes heroes to detour through hostile territory. |
| 6 Construct bridge or fortification (or guard engineers on such a project). | 10 New orders received during mission. |
| 7 Defend allied commanders or important information. | 11 NPC commander, guide, or other support is incompetent. |
| 8 Defend allied camp. | 12 Objective is in bad terrain (dense forest, mountains, swamp) |
| 9 Defend allied fortification or settlement. | 13 Rival allies on the same mission want the glory. |
| 10 Defend important terrain (ford, bridge, pass, hill). | 14 Support troops fail to materialize. |
| 11 Deliver orders to allied unit. | 15 Support units desert at crucial moment. |
| 12 Deliver supplies to allied unit. | 16 The heroes become lost and end up deep in enemy territory. |
| 13 Destroy enemy supplies. | 17 Trapped behind enemy lines by enemy troop movements. |
| 14 Intercept enemy messengers. | 18 Very bad weather (-1 to all trait rolls and half Pace due to weather). |
| 15 Liberate prisoners/allied force (or individual) in trouble. | 19 None. Everything goes according to plan for a change. |
| 16 Patrol duty. | 20 Disaster! Roll twice on this table (reroll further results of 20). |
| 17 Reconnoiter enemy fortification or settlement. | |
| 18 Recruit and train militia. | |
| 19 Track down deserters or enemy spies. | |
| 20 Double duty. Roll twice on this table (ignoring further results of 20). | |

TABLE 5: COMPLICATIONS

d20 Result

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Allied troops retreat (to engage enemy or because of enemy numbers) without telling the heroes. |
| 2 | Allied support or other NPC is a traitor. |
| 3 | Allied unit nearby asks for aid in their own mission. |
| 4 | Ambushed by enemy force (Roll on Table 4A or 4B as appropriate). |

Not every event in the heroes' lives revolves around warfare. This section lists a number of distractions you can use to add something unusual to your game sessions. You can either pick one, or roll a d20. If you roll a distraction you have already used, take the next unused entry.

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1) | Another Lance develops an intense rivalry with the characters'. Each is always trying to outdo the other. |
| 2) | One of the characters meets a girl in a local village or town. Whether a relationship develops, she pursues him against his wishes, or the pair |

NECROPOLIS 2350 ADVENTURE COMPENDIUM

- form a Platonic friendship, the girl's family strongly disapproves, as does the hero's Knight Commander.
- 3) Somehow the characters make an enemy in their Ordo. The enemy outranks the characters and decides to make their life a misery. This may have a detrimental effect on the Lance's morale.
 - 4) One or more of the characters makes a very close friend in their Banner or an allied unit. If this friend is killed, the character(s) suffer -1 to Spirit rolls for the next mission.
 - 5) The hero with the lowest Vigor catches a cold, leaving the character Fatigued for 1d4 days.
 - 6) The characters hear rumors of some type of hideous creature inhabiting the local wilderness. The rumors are false and any investigation leads nowhere.
 - 7) The Banner has taken heavy losses recently. Until the heroes secure a major victory over the Rephaim, they suffer -1 to all Spirit rolls.
 - 8) The heroes' immediate superior is replaced with a political appointee who has no battlefield experience. Treat him as a Citizen with Knowledge (Battle) d4.
 - 9) Disease sweeps the region. This not only affects the civilian population, but also the Preceptory's combat strength.
 - 10) The local archbishop visits the Preceptory on a goodwill mission. If the heroes can impress him, he blesses them, granting each hero +1 to Spirit rolls for the next month.
 - 11) A Penitent assigned to the unit is someone the heroes know (perhaps a former comrade). He wants their help in regaining his honor as quickly as possible.
 - 12) One of the characters' comrades wants a Papal blessing and keeps on talking about it. He starts to take unnecessary risks.
 - 13) Cutbacks because of the fight for New Budapest mean the Grand Master plans to close the heroes' Preceptory unless they achieve a major military victory in the near future.
 - 14) A heat wave or cold snap strikes the region. Temperatures rise to over 110 (43° C) or drop to 12 (-11° C) or lower, whichever suits the region. This lasts for the next mission.
 - 15) An important member of the unit suffers a crisis of faith. Until it is regained, he cannot use bennies and has his Spirit lowered one die step (min d4). If it is a leader, he loses his Leadership Edges as well.
 - 16) A close friend of the heroes deserts. Can they find him before his absence is noticed by their Knight Commander?
 - 17) The Preceptory has an ammo crisis. For the next mission, the Knights are issued just half the usual ammo load and have no artillery or air support. This can be reused in an alternate way, with fuel shortages grounding all vehicles.
 - 18) A well-liked Sergeant is getting married and invites the Knights to attend. This may be an opportunity for social role-playing or a chance for heretics to take out the Knights while they are unarmed (except for swords).
 - 19) The Lance receives letters from friends and loved ones, a rare but not unknown event. Recipients' Spirit rolls are boosted by +1 for the next month. Each character has a letter on a d6 roll of 1-3.
 - 20) The Preceptory is having one of those days when everything seems to be going wrong. Roll for two Distractions.

THE CAST

All the stats used in the adventures are grouped here for convenience. Stat blocks are listed alphabetically, first by Church forces or allies, and then by Rephaim or other adversaries.

KNIGHT ASSAULT (LAZARITE)

Although the Lazarites refer to these soldiers as Assault Knights, they actually serve to clean up any "mistakes" involving Lazarite research into the Rephaim. They don't serve in the regular army, but work solely in the Lazarites' secret facilities.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 15(8)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Dodge

Training: Rephaim Knowledge, Specimen Collection

Gear: Infantry battle suit (+8), flamethrower (Range: Cone, Damage 2d10, ignores armor), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4), ID tag

KNIGHT COMBAT MEDIC (PREACHER)

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d6, Healing d8, Notice d6, Shooting d4, Stealth d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Healer, Improved Dodge, Medic

Training: Hearts & Minds, Training Cadre

Gear: Light armor (+4), flechette SMG with 3 mags (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 2, Auto), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4), medic kit, ID tag

KNIGHT INFANTRYMAN (NO ORDO)

Knight Infantryman can be used to bring the group up to five or six characters (the typical strength for a Lance). The special abilities are used only in the adventure **What Price Victory?**

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11(6)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge

Gear: Medium armor (+6), flechette rifle with 3 mags (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8+1, AP2, Auto, 3RB), 5 grenades (Range: 3/6/12, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, MBT), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4), medpac, ID tag

Special Abilities:

* **Paralysis:** Victims must make a Vigor roll or be paralyzed and incapable of any action—even speech—for 2d6 rounds.

* **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and

disease. No additional damage from called shots. Ignores wound penalties.

KNIGHT VEHICLE CREW (TEMPLAR)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d4, Guts d4, Notice d6, Repair d6, Shooting d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 9(4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Ace, Combat Reflexes

Training: Vehicle Expertise (Driving)

Gear: Light armor (+4), flechette SMG, 3 magazines (Ranged: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 2, Auto), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4), medpac, ID tag



LAZARITE FIELD MASTER WHEELER

A close friend of Lazarite Grand Master O'Flaherty, Field Master Wheeler is privy to many of the Lazarites' darkest secrets. For this reason, she is always accompanied by at least one Lance of Assault Knights equipped with flamethrowers (with orders to prevent her capture using lethal force). She isn't the head of Project Lazarus, but she's fully aware of what the project entails. A true Lazarite, she can see no wrong in her work—mankind must win the war, and that means using "unconventional tactics."

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Knowledge (Battle) d10, Knowledge (Rephaim) d10, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11(6)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Cautious, Loyal, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Attractive, Combat Reflexes, Command, Command Presence, Fervor, Hard to Kill, Hold the Line, Improved Dodge, Tactician

Training: Rephaim Knowledge, Specimen Collection

Gear: Medium armor (+6), flechette pistol (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, Shots 30, AP 2, Semi-auto), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4), ID scanner, ID tag.

MILITIA

These citizens aren't an organized militia—they're survivors who've learned to use guns and stay alive. Their weapons were scavenged

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from a sporting goods store. Despite ten years of preserving ammo and avoiding fights, they're down to their last few shells apiece.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Shooting d6, Stealth

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Shotgun (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 1-3d6, +2 Shooting), no reloads, molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2)

SERGEANT

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Guts d4, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9(4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: —

Gear: Light armor (+4), flechette SMG with 2 magazines (Ranged: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 2, Auto), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2), medpac

BANK ROBBER

These criminals are ex-Corporate soldiers who've decided to supplement their regular income by robbing banks. They're trained, disciplined, and more importantly, well-armed.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Mean

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Rock and Roll

Gear: Light armor (+4), 6mm SMG with 2 magazines (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, ROF 3), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2), headset comms, medpac, ID tag

EXPLODING CORPSE

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Stealth d8

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

* **Bite or Claws:** Str+d4.

* **Explode:** When an exploding corpse is wounded it explodes for 4d10 damage in a Medium Burst Template. This may cause a chain reaction if other exploding corpses

are caught in the template. This counts as a Heavy Weapon.

* **Firearm Absorption:** Exploding corpses ignore all piercing weapon damage. Heavy Weapons, other melee weapons, lasers, explosive weapons, and flamethrowers inflict normal damage.

* **Stench:** Characters who make a successful Notice check may detect the smell up to 6" away (12" downwind). The putrid stench permeates everything except airtight vessels (most armored vehicles).

* **Thermal Vision:** Exploding corpses halve penalties for darkness against living targets (round down).

* **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots.

* **Weakness (Fire):** Fire is especially dangerous to exploding corpses. They automatically catch fire. After that they suffer 2d10 damage per round until they explode.



MUMMY, GREATER

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d12, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d12, Intimidation d10, Necromancy d10, Notice d8

Pace: 4 (d4 running die); **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 15(5)

Gear: Stygian armor (+5), rune sword (Str+d8+4, AP 4)

Special Abilities:

* **Arcane Background (Magic):** A mummy typically knows *barrier* (creates a wall of darkness), *bolt* (swarm of tiny skulls), *deflection* (shield of swirling skulls), *fear* (uncerthly cry), *obscure* (area of darkness), and *zombie* (ritual preparation) (35 Power Points).

* **Crushing Grasp:** Str+d6. On a raise, the mummy automatically grapples its opponent.

* **Fear (-2):** Opponents must make a Guts roll at -2.

* **Greater Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots. Half-damage from piercing weapons. Ignores Wound Penalties.

* **Improved Arcane Resistance:** +4 Armor versus magic, and +4 to rolls made to resist magic effects.

* **Mummy Rot:** Anyone touched by a mummy, whether he is damaged or not,

must make a Vigor roll. Failure means the character has “mummy rot” and suffers an immediate wound. Victims who die as result of “mummy rot” may be brought back as guardian mummies.

- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.
- * **Weakness (Fire):** Mummies take +4 damage from fire.

NECROSCOPE

Necroscopes are Rephaim bloodhounds, capable of sensing living creatures through even the thickest armor or shielding. Gray-skinned and hunched, with huge, bulging, black eyes and enlarged nostrils and ears, they lead Rephaim to hiding prey or serve as sentries. They have no mouth and are not capable of communicating beyond pointing to their targets with their withered arms.

Though they undoubtedly have superior eyesight, smell, and hearing to a human, they can also sense air currents, heat signatures, and, to a limited degree, pick up strong thoughts. This battery of senses gives them their ability to apparently “see” through objects.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d12, Tracking d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- * **Battery of Senses:** Necroscopes can use their Notice to detect living creatures within 24”, even those concealed behind solid objects (or inside vehicles). This is opposed by Stealth as normal. They suffer no penalties for darkness or concealment and always count as alert sentries.
- * **Size -1:** Necroscopes are similar in size to small children.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. No additional damage from Called Shots. Immune to poison and disease. Half damage from piercing weapons.

SBACULA

SBACulas are hulking, Rephaim brutes, created by the liches to work in the mines and on other construction projects. Dumb and strong, they have proven very capable workers.

Lacking much in the way of mobile infantry support, the Dark Conclave came up with the idea of strapping captured SBACs to these brutes, known among the Rephaim as “mules,”

and transforming them into walking gun platforms. Though they are of little use against tanks, their weapons can penetrate APCs and other light support vehicles.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 12

Gear: 25mm SBAC (Range: 30/60/120, Damage 3d8, AP 10, Small Burst Template), 3 full reloads

Special Abilities:

- * **Brawny:** +1 Toughness, carrying capacity of 8 x Str.
- * **Claws:** Str+d6.
- * **Hardy:** Multiple Shaken results do not cause a wound.
- * **Size +2:** SBACulas stand 9’ tall and weigh around 400 pounds.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Halves penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage. Immune to poison and disease. Piercing weapons do half damage.

SKELETON

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7/11(4)

Gear: Typically a flechette rifle with 3 magazines (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8+1, AP 2, Auto, 3RB), 1d3 grenades (Range: 20/40/80, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, MBT); 50% have light armor (+4)

Special Abilities:

- * **Bony Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Fearless:** Skeletons are immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots. Half-damage from piercing weapons.

ZOMBIE

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4,

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Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 4 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Flechette SMG with 2 magazines (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1AP 2, Auto)

Special Abilities:

- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots. Half-damage from piercing weapons.

ZOMBIE GRENADIER

Zombie grenadiers provide support to Rephaim troops through a variety of grenades launched from a Brimstone. They aren't accurate marksmen, but Rephaim commanders are far less worried about friendly fire incidents than their human counterparts. GMs who want to use skeleton grenadiers need simply add the gear and Grenades special ability to the base skeleton stat block.

The italicized stat entries below allow for more experienced grenadiers. All entries are cumulative (so an elite grenadier gains the benefits of all three entries). From 2352 onward, zombie grenadiers begin making use of captured Maximus rotary grenade launchers (see 2351-55 *Update*).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 4 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 7/11(4)

Gear: Brimstone grenade launcher (Range: 20/40/80, Damage: as grenade, see below, no reloads); 50% have light armor (+4).

Special Abilities:

- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Grenades:** Zombies aren't clever. Grenadiers load whatever grenades they can find, without caring about their type. Each time the zombie fires, roll a d10 to determine the type of grenade launched: 1-6 monofilament; 7-9 incendiary, 10 starshell.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.

- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots. Half-damage from piercing weapons.

Skilled: Grenade Launcher King

Experienced: Shooting d8, Marksman

Elite: Grenade Launcher God

ZOMBIE SNIPER

Even with flechette weapons, which produce minimal noise and no muzzle flash, human snipers are trained to fire and move—staying stationary is a sure way to get yourself killed. Zombies don't have the same survival instincts as humans, nor do they possess cognitive abilities of any note. As such, once they find a good position they stay there and keep firing. This mentality only changes when a zombie has survived long enough to develop rudimentary tactics.

The italicized stat entries below allow for more experienced snipers. All entries are cumulative (so an elite sniper gains the benefits of all three entries).

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 4 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Flechette sniper rifle with 2 magazines (Range: 30/60/120, Damage: 2d8+1, AP 2, integral scope)

Special Abilities:

- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Marksman:** +2 to Shooting rolls if it remains stationary.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots. Half-damage from piercing weapons.

Skilled: Shooting d8

Experienced: Dig In, Steady Hands

Elite: Move and Fire

PLAYER HANDOUT #1: TACTICAL BRIEFING

Date: 32.VI.2050; 2030 Zulu.

Ten years ago, the Rephaim captured the city of Olisipo, south of what is now the border between Dead Zone Beta and Tomaculum. You'll be handed a small data file on the city after the briefing.

Much of the city was destroyed and we managed to evacuate the vast majority of citizens, so we have no immediate interest in recapturing it. The Rephaim seem to know this, because they haven't bothered fortifying it. What they have been doing is field testing new species, though. It seems they use the city as a sort of training ground, which has played right into our hands.

Over the last few years, the Ordines have conducted a number of covert missions into Olisipo for the purposes of grabbing specimens. We don't take many and we don't do it often—as far as we know, the Rephaim are none the wiser, and attribute any losses to their live-fire combat exercises. Your mission is to follow on from other missions and snatch living specimens for our Lazarite comrades to play with.

Technicians have modified a Job supply truck by adding a number of sturdy holding tanks and fitting seats for your Lance. It won't be a smooth ride, but she's perfect for the task. The tanks are rated 12D, which should suffice most regular Rephaim. If you get anything stronger, we can't guarantee how long they'll be contained.

A Nephilim Dropship will drop the APC in the docklands district just before dawn. We don't want the Rephaim alerted to your presence, so the Nephilim won't be available for air support. The pilot will circle around in the wastes between the city and the border, dropping into headset communication range every 30 minutes or so. Signal as soon as you've got a specimen and she'll land and pick you up. We want to minimize her presence, so work fast.

Enemy Forces: The bulk of the enemy forces are known to comprise skeletons and zombies. We're not interested in these, though, or in vampires or mummies. The Lazarites want new specimens. In essence, if you encounter something you've never seen before, grab it! Avoid engagements with regular Rephaim forces at all costs.

Support: Because this is a covert mission, you'll be going in alone. Sergeants just don't have the training for this sort of work. This is another reason for you to avoid contact where possible.

Equipment: This is a snatch-and-grab mission. Aside from your regular gear, the Lance will be issued with two tangle guns, each with two rounds. Everyone is to take a mancatcher as well.

OLISIPO (CENSUS RECORD 2340)

Population: 1.32 million (currently abandoned).

Location: 75 miles south of current Tomaculum border and 22 miles inland. The city sits on the southern bank of the Tamesis River.

Purpose: Heavy industry and shipbuilding hub (nonfunctional).

Olisipo was divided into two distinct areas.

Located on the river banks were the docks, shipyards, and heavy industry plants. During the Rephaim invasion, the docks served as the stronghold for the Ordines. Almost the entire population was evacuated from here on heavily armed ships, or via convoys of Job supply trucks and Pedael cargo lifters. Before the final withdraw, the Ordines ordered an intense artillery and aerial bombardment to deny the Rephaim use of any facilities.

The residential and administrative districts were constructed five miles south of the city, along Highway 19R, in a series of four concentric circles. The outermost zone contained housing for the general populace. Next were light industrial and administrative businesses. Inside of this sat the housing of the elite, and well as an urban Preceptory. The core district served the Curia, and contained two notable buildings—the Cathedral of St. Thomas, and the Basilica of the Rose-Cross.

PLAYER HANDOUT #2: TACTICAL BRIEFING

Date: 05.VIII.2050; 0730 Zulu.

Sit down and shut up—this one is serious, and I want your full attention.

Two months ago, Cardinal David Vespasian of the Office of Agriculture was kidnapped along with his entourage. The kidnappers are members of the Independence Movement. Intelligence reports they're farmers living near the Kobia border who want to secede from the Church and join the Union. Until now they've been very low key and more a nuisance than a threat, but now they've crossed the line.

It's taken a while, but we've finally deduced the kidnappers have taken up refuge in the old monastery of St. Maximilian. It's not well-fortified, but its location makes it a bitch to reach without being seen. The monks lived a hermit lifestyle, and constructed their home on a rocky ledge high in the mountains.

The Grand Master received instructions a short while later from His Holiness to rescue the cardinal and his entourage through military force. Apparently the Curia wanted the Praetorians and Teutonics to handle the rescue, but the Pope felt we were better equipped.

The compound, you'll get a map soon so stow any questions about the layout right now, is inaccessible from the ground except by a treacherous climb or a winch lowered from the monastery. We doubt the kidnappers will be so kind as to invite you in, though. For that reason, we're going to rely on stealth to get you into the compound. You'll be dropped right into the monastery via Cherubs.

Once you're down, they'll take up holding positions nearby, along with a third Cherub for hostage extraction. Once you have secured the prisoners and are in the open, the Cherub will land to collect the hostages while the others provide fire support. Only when the hostages are safely in the air will you be permitted to leave.

The wind shear in the mountains can be lethal. For that reason, the senior Cherub pilot has the final go/no go decision on whether the insertion is possible. If he says he can't land safely you'll be climbing several hundred feet of vertical cliff, so make sure you take suitable equipment!

To ensure other enemies of the Church know kidnapping will not be tolerated, Papa John has ordered your camera feeds and audio signals to be broadcast live once the operation commences. The monastery has no communication equipment—it doesn't even have electricity—and it's too far from the transmitters to pick up stray signals on portable units. The Cherubs will forward your signals to the nearest relay station.

We rescue Vespasian successfully, and we get a major public relations boon. Screw up, and this will make us look very bad in front of millions of citizens. It'll also give separatists across Salus a major boost to their cause.

Okay, aside from Vespasian, the entourage includes First Secretary Pietr Damocles of the Office of Agriculture New Territories Province, Archpriest Maria Valence, the local priest, and three Knights from the Praetorians—Johnson, Irobi, and Zelwigger. Two other Knights were slain in the kidnapping.

Once you're tooled up, you'll be flown to a forward camp nearer the mountains to plan your operation. His Holiness wants this to be hard and fast, so don't dally making detailed plans.

Enemy Forces: A Cherub performed a flyby during the night, but the enemy wasn't playing ball. As best as we can tell, you'll be facing maybe a dozen or so citizens armed with shotguns and flechette SMGs. Chances are the militants are Preacher-trained, so they do know how to use their guns. They might have a few grenades at their disposal if the Cardinal's entourage were dumb enough to carry any.

Support: A second Lance of Knights, Lance XI Banner B, will be accompanying you on this one. You're the senior Lance, and your Senior Knight is the mission commander.

Equipment: The Curia has sanctioned extreme force for this mission, but they don't want the cardinal wasted by trigger-happy Knights. For that reason, you'll be restricted to smoke grenades only.

Since this is a rescue mission and not a raid, you'll all be issued with SMGs instead of your usual primary weapons. They're far more compact than rifles, and much better in a tight environment. No support weapons of any sort will be issued. Any Infantry Support Knights had better get used to being a grunt for a while.

TALES FROM THE FRONT LINE TWO

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Tales from the Frontline 2! This mission pack contains three adventures written for the Necropolis 2350 campaign setting. If you intend to play in these missions, you should stop reading now. Advanced knowledge of the scenarios will only spoil your enjoyment of the game. There's also a quick set of rules for designing non-combat missions.

The WM should read each adventure before play begins. Knowing the basic flow and details in advance will greatly speed up play and make the game run smoother.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

You need a copy of the Savage Worlds rulebook, the Necropolis: 2350 setting book, and the Necropolis 2351-55 Update. The Necropolis Figure Flats are recommended.

CHARACTERS

Each adventure is designed around a squad of four Knights. The specific adventures suggest suitable character Ranks and Experience Point totals. For larger groups or more experienced characters, the WM should adjust the number and stats of opponents appropriately to create an exciting challenge. Use the archetypes from the Necropolis 2350 setting book if you need pre-generated characters. Each archetype has been designed as a starting character, and thus should be awarded advancements as required to bring it up to the adventure Rank.

LAST TRAIN TO DOOMSDAY

In this short adventure, the heroes have to board a moving train and stop a Rephaim plot to seed a city with a powerful necromantic virus. If they fail, tens of thousands of citizens could transform into zombies right in the heart of Church territory.

The adventure is set near The New Territories and the Augustine Territories, and is ideal for a Gamma Front campaign. WM's setting their campaign in another part of the world should feel free to alter these details appropriately. Alternately, the Knights may be on secondment or undergoing training at a local Preceptory, thus placing them in the right place at the right time.

Rank: Seasoned (25–30 XP).

BRIEFING

At the crack of dawn, you were roused and ordered to prepare for a mission, foregoing the usual breakfast and prayers. What makes today more unusual from the usual routine is that you've been aboard an Angel heading across the landscape for an hour, and you still don't know where you're going or why. Even the pilot seems unsure as to what he has to do, besides fly you to a set of coordinates.

You've had chance to converse with the pilot about the location. Unless he's made an error, it looks like you're going to an abandoned mining town in the wastes between The New Territories and the Augustine Territories.

The muted silence in the dropship passenger bay is broken suddenly by your headset comms, crackling into life. "Sir," says the pilot over the link, "I've got the Preceptor Intelligence Officer on the line with your briefing. Patching him through now."

Read or paraphrase the following information.

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PIO'S BRIEFING

Sorry to rush you into the air without giving you a heads up in advance, but we needed you airborne while we were collecting and correlating data. Time is of the essence on this one.

Early this morning, a freight train carrying industrial parts, assorted goods, and chemicals left Messina, in The New Territories, for Vigornia, in the Augustine Territories. Not long after, we received a report from our comrades in The New Territories that a routine security sweep discovered heretical materials in the lodgings of the two security troops stationed aboard the train.

We've been told some of the chemicals onboard are highly explosive, and could therefore be used in a terrorist attack. Given that the only known armed personnel on the train are heretics, we're pretty sure the train is now a large bomb. Ideally, we'd just blow the train off the tracks and call the job done, but this train is carrying passengers as well as freight, and we can't allow innocents to die while there's a chance to bring the situation under control.

However, once the train gets within 10 miles of the nearest settlement, we'll have no choice but to launch a full airstrike unless you signal the all clear. Assuming the train follows the correct speeds all the way, that'll give you just 30 minutes from the time you board.

The train runs on a fully automatic system, but the override isn't functioning. We suspect a jammer has been setup on the train, confirming our worst fears. That also means you're headset comms aren't going to work. I hope you remember your hand signals training.

Your orders are to board the train, neutralize any terrorists, and bring her to a manual halt in that order—don't stop the train before securing it, just in case the terrorists get boom-happy and decide to become martyrs to their warped cause.

Ideally, we'd drop you right onto the train by Angel, but for the reasons stated before we can't risk that. There's also a chance the heretics are serious players and are packing Doves, or other heavy weapons, aimed at preventing a boarding action.

Fortunately, there's an abandoned mining station along the route, and the train's got to pass through it. Although the train isn't scheduled to stop there, she's programmed to slow down. She'll be moving just slow enough for you to leap aboard. You heard me right; you're going to have to jump onto a moving train.

We've got no idea what state the mining town is in, but it's likely filled with debris. All simulations have indicated the Angel's downwash could blow debris onto the tracks, and that in turn could derail the train. To that end, you'll be dropped outside the train station. From there, make your way onto the platform as quickly as possible—calculations indicate you'll have just a few minutes at best from landing until the train rolls through.

According to the stationmaster in Messina, this particular train had a total of ten flatbeds at the rear, an armored carriage, for security personnel or holding unruly passengers, five passenger compartments, eight more flatbeds, the first class carriage, and then the engine. Aim for a flatbed—the other cars don't have any handholds. For the love of God don't miss!

Enemy Forces: *The freight company tells us there are 36 passengers and five crewmembers, not counting the two security guards, who we know are hostiles. We have no idea how many of these may be terrorists, which isn't going to make your job any easier. Consider everyone a potential threat.*

Support: *The Angel is going to be extremely short on fuel when it drops you off, so it won't be hanging around for air support or evacuation duties. We're prepping more dropships as they return from missions and getting them airborne, but it's going to be tight getting them to you before the train hits the point of no return, and we can't get them in close until all hostiles are neutralized.*

Equipment: *Sorry we never had time to issue any specific kit. I'm afraid you'll have to make do with whatever you're carrying on this one.*

The Preceptor Intelligence Master doesn't have much else he can add at this stage, so the GM should refrain from answering any questions the Knights might have in detail. The Knights have just the standard kit and ammo loads for their specialty.

A few moments after the PIO's briefing is over, the pilot comes over the line again. *"Sir, we're going green and mean in about two minutes. We can see the train on its approach. You don't have much time once we bit dirt. The station looks...clear. No sign of hostiles."*

The pilot recommends touching down in the streets outside the station. The yard is full of abandoned automobiles, and piles of loose rubbish are a hazard if they get sucked into an intake. Ordering him to disobey the PIO and hover in the yard requires an Intimidation roll at -2. Convincing him to hover over the tracks is impossible—he's quite prepared to disobey a Senior Knight when the order places him and his co-pilot at risk.

TOUCH DOWN

The Angel touches down, kicking up a great plume of dust and loose debris. As soon as the last Knight is off, it blasts back into the sky and heads for home.

The moment the characters set foot inside the station, whether they enter through the gate or leap out the Angel directly into the yard, they come under sustained automatic fire from a squad of zombies placed here to prevent the Church from boarding the train as it passes through the station. The Rephaim know about the automatic control system from cultists, but they have no idea how to disable it without stopping the train dead.

Check for Surprise.

The station yard measures 20" wide and 16" deep. The western side, through which the heroes enter, is a high wall broken by a 2" wide gate in the center. To the north, the precinct is bordered by the old customs and ticket offices. A single door (1" wide) and a pair of windows face into the station's yard. The south is the side of a warehouse, and lacks any windows or doors. The western end is the platform.

Within the yard are four rusted automobiles (3" long and 2" wide), a few piles of debris left behind when the miners left, and other detritus.

Two tracks run through the mining town. The one nearest the station is the one the inbound train uses. On the other sit two rusting passenger cars (10" long and 3" wide), the glass in their windows long smashed and the doors smashed off.

One-third of the zombies are in the old customs house and ticket office, and one-third hiding inside the wrecked automobiles. Half

the remaining zombies are in the rusting cars across the tracks, and two are lurking on the customs building roof, having been hiding under sheets of corrugated metal when the dropship roared into sight.

The front of the train enters the station at the start of the second combat round from the north and moving south. Deal the train a single initiative card. Its only action is to move 20".

As noted in the briefing, the order the various components roar through the station are the engine, first class carriage, eight flatbeds, five passenger cars, an armored carriage, and ten flatbeds. Each car, including the engine, is 10" long, and the train is moving at 20" per round. At that rate, the engine and its 26 cars will completely clear the platform in exactly 14 rounds. If the heroes aren't aboard by then, they've screwed up—the Angel hasn't enough fuel to return, pick them up, and chase the locomotive. See **Aftermath** on page 172 for ideas on what to do in this occurrence.

Zombies (3 per hero): See page 195.

ALL ABOARD THE DOOM TRAIN

Boarding the train requires the Knights to be adjacent to the tracks and a car. Each Knight must make an Agility roll, modified by the type of car they're trying to leap onto. Except for the flatbeds, which give a -1 penalty, trying to board the moving train by any other car gives a flat -6 penalty.

On a result of 1 or less after modifiers, the Knight tries the jump, fails, and is dragged along the platform for 4d6 damage before he manages to let go. He is prone on the platform, 1d6" further south than his previous position. With any other failure, the Knight didn't actually make the jump—he thought better of it.

Should he move off the platform because of this, he is lying beside the tracks. Any attempts to jump onto the train from there are made at a further -2 penalty. Climbing back onto the platform uses 2" of movement, but is not a distinct action (there are steps).

Note that depending where the characters board, they may be *immediately* attacked by Rephaim.

Once on board, the Knights have 30 minutes before the bombers unleash their payloads. Since a combat round is 6 seconds, it's unlikely the fighting will burn up much time.

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Likewise, at 10" long, the cars can be traversed in just two combat rounds. What will burn time is Healing, which takes 10 minutes per attempt. Without a Faithful with the *bealing* litany, the Knights cannot afford to spend time patching up their wounds.

THE TRAIN'S LAYOUT & PASSENGERS

The train is divided, as previously noted, into different types of car. For game purposes, each is 10" long and 3" wide. There is a minimal gap between the cars (about 6 real inches in total).

Only the freight cards are exposed to the elements—the rest are armored (engine and armored car have Toughness 18(4) Heavy Armor, and the cars are Toughness 12(2)). Unless otherwise noted, all doors slide open and are activated with a simple push button. All windows in the passenger cars are covered in metal slit shutters. These are attached to the walls on the inside, preventing the Knights from unscrewing them.

Combat: The train counts as an Unstable Platform. Movement over seats or across the freight car's cargo counts as difficult terrain (unless the cargo is considered impassable).

Communications: A jammer is located under the rocket (page 164). Until it is switched off, the Knights can't use their headset communicators, and the train can't be stopped.

Jumping: Once the train clears the mining town, it increases speed to 100 mph (or 40" per round). Any Knight who abandons the train suffers 8d6. This is halved if the jumper makes an Agility roll, as normal.

THE REPHAIM

Leading the Rephaim is High Exarch Malifex, a zombie lord. He boarded the train with just six elite zombies, more than enough to deal with a few unarmed humans. In addition, the security guards on the train were heretics, planted in the company by Malifex in preparation for the plot.

Of the 43 humans aboard the train, two are already accounted for. The crew comprised five loadmasters assigned to safeguard the cargo. The remaining 36 were passengers (five first class and 31 standard class). Most of the humans were slain in the attack, much to Malifex's dismay.

The two guards were executed and subsequently raised as zombies by Malifex, as were a total of 19 passengers and crew (through the zombie lord's Necromancy or Sire abilities), giving Malifex an army of 27 loyal minions. Their locations are detailed in the text below.

TACTICS

Aside from Malifex and his elite zombies, the remaining Rephaim are completely mindless. Despite lacking any autofire skills and being on a swaying train, they use full auto each round. Against a foe in the open at short range, this means they require an 8+ to hit. All being well, this inability to hit will cause the Knights to grow complacent, even arrogant, as they wade through their foes.

They'll be in for a shock when they encounter the elite zombies, however. Not only do they have armor, but they're quite skilled with their firearms and understand the tactical advantages of using cover and going on Hold. Unless the Knights employ tactics, the fight against these implacable foes could be quite brutal.

All the zombies count as alert sentries.

The common zombies investigate shouts (zombies don't speak, and they know Malifex's voice), explosions, and other "combat noises." Any of these sounds made on an adjacent car summon the zombies automatically. The one exception is the elite zombies—they never leave the car containing the rocket unless directly ordered by Malifex.

If Malifex is alerted to sounds of an attack, he abandons his command post in the armored car (page 171) and heads for the freight car containing his weapon. If he sees the Knights on the one remaining security camera, he summons his entire army to head toward the freight car carrying the rocket and engage in combat.

ENGINE

Only a small compartment (1" square) on the right hand side of the engine car is accessible—the rest contains the engine and various drive systems—and is normally used only by maintenance teams when the train is stopped. In a cost-cutting exercise, the freight company neglected to order the optional manual override control panel. In short, there's no way to stop the train from onboard.

The only way inside, once the train is underway, is to walk along the roof, and then swing down into the driver's cabin. Walking the roof is difficult ground, and swinging in requires an

Agility roll. Failure leaves the Knight dangling precariously as the ground rushes by. Since a Knight who falls has no chance of getting back onto the train (and therefore won't take part in the rest of the adventure), try to avoid the temptation to have one go tumbling over the edge.

FLATBED

The flatbeds have low railings (2' high) along all the sides, with a 1" wide gap where the cars touch adjoining ones.

CARGO

The train is carrying a variety of cargo. Freight cars are numbered from the front of the train. In addition to its regular cargo, one of the freight cars carries a special weapon. Its location is determined by where the heroes boarded the train. See **The Real Danger** (page 172).

Car	Cargo
1-6	Crates: The freight cars are loaded with crates of machine parts, canned food, and other common freight goods, ultimately useless to the Knights. These boxes should be placed so as to create cover and break up straight line movement (thus allowing a more tactical approach to combat).
7-10	Long Pipes: The sides of the cars are loaded with long lengths of pipes, held together with chains. Each bundle of pipes is 5" long and 1" wide, and there are four bundles per car. The chains are Small targets (-2) and have Toughness 10. When a chain takes a wound, it shatters, spilling the cargo of pipes. Draw a card from the action deck. A red card or Joker means the train's movement spills the pipes into the car. All creatures adjacent to the cargo must make an Agility roll at -2 or suffer 2d10 damage. A black card indicates the pipes fall harmlessly over the side.
11-12	Explosive Chemicals: Each freight car is carrying four large tanks of chemicals, which react violently with air. Each tank measures 1" wide and 3" long, and has Toughness 16(4). The tanks

are designed to be self-sealing, but the system isn't foolproof. Use the Innocent Bystander rule whenever combat occurs on these freight cars—each 1" of the tanks counts as a unique "bystander" for this purpose.

When a tank takes a wound, draw a card from the action deck. A black face card (Jack through Ace) causes the tank to explode if the attack was from a non-Heavy Weapon. This fills a Large Burst Template, and inflicts 4d20 damage to everything beneath. A Heavy Weapon creates an explosion as above if the face card is any black suit.

Oil: This isn't fuel oil, but lubricant. The barrels are small enough to fit a dozen in a single 1" square, and many stacks are 2" high (the barrels are lashed together to stop them falling over). The barrels have Toughness 8.

While the contents are nonflammable, they are slippery. A barrel which takes a wound leaks a Small Burst Template of oil, centered on the barrel over the car. Movement through this patch is difficult ground. Any hero who runs and rolls a 1 on his running die, or who rolls a 1 on his Agility die (regardless of the Wild Die), slips and falls prone. Due to the slipperiness, standing up requires an action.

Crates: As #1-6.

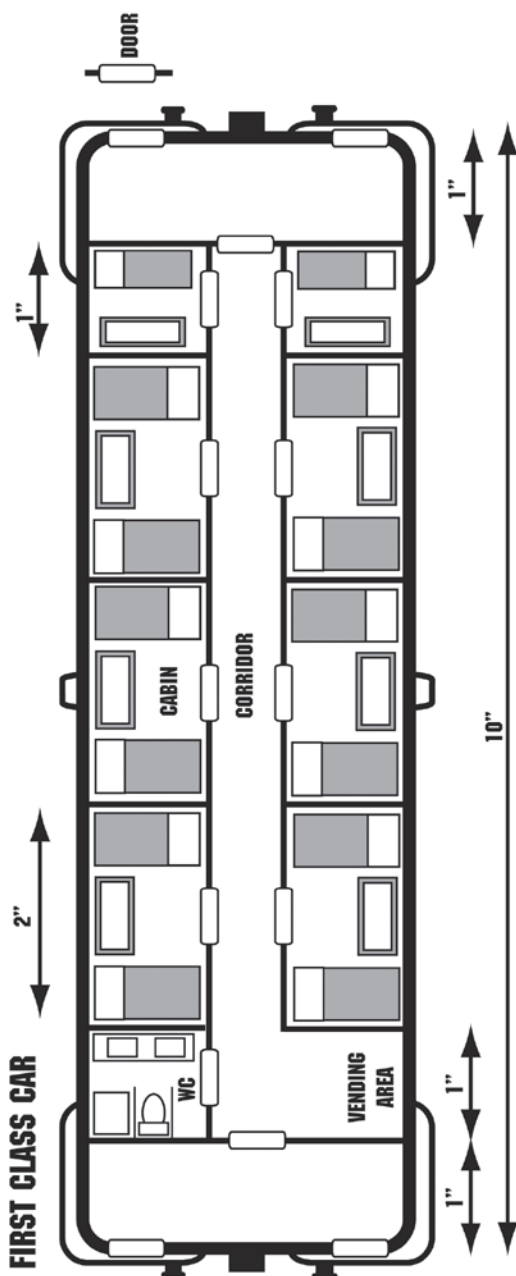
Heavy Plant: The final car is carrying two heavy plant machines—a bulldozer (2" wide and 3" long) and a small crane (4" long and 2" wide).

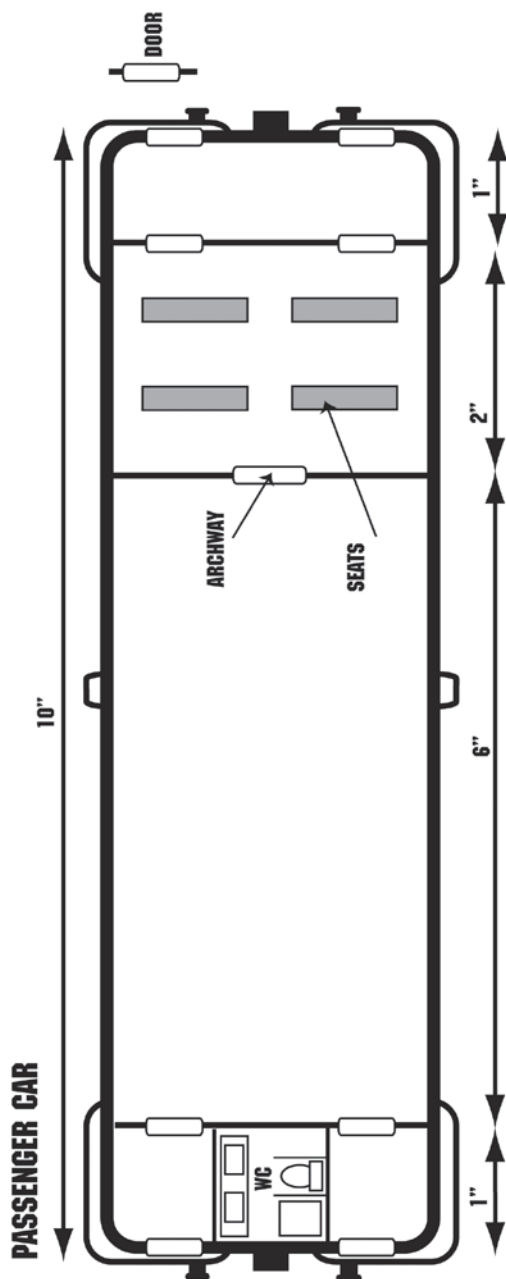
REPHAIM

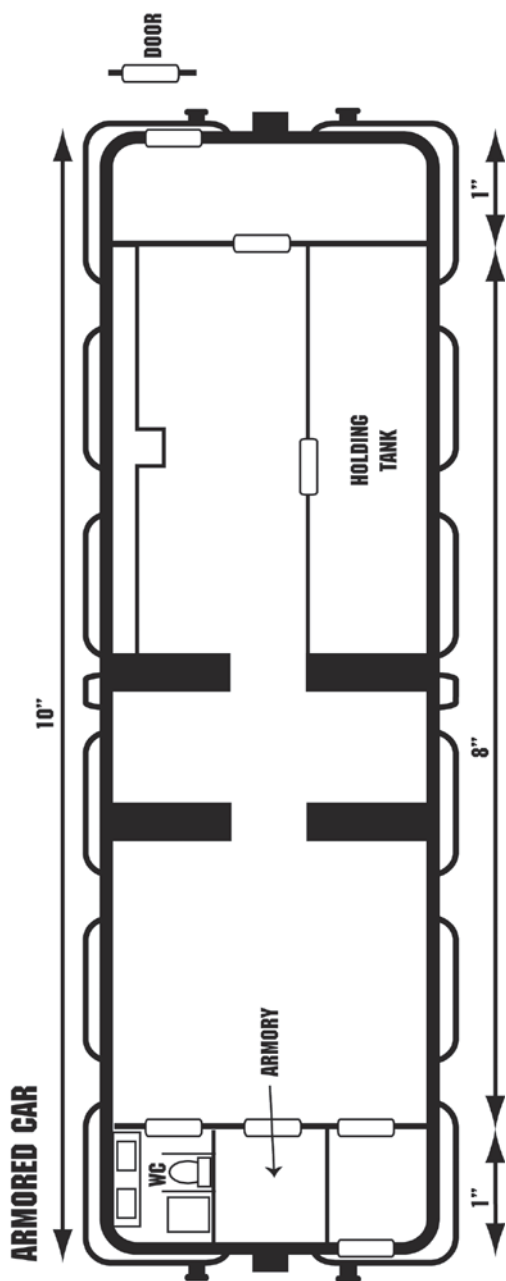
A total of 13 zombies are patrolling the freight cars. Their starting locations are as noted below:

Car	Zombies
#4	2
#7	2
#9	3
#10	2
#12	2
#16	2

Zombies (13): See page 195.







FIRST CLASS CAR

Freight trains provide a single, first class car, mainly in the hope of luring a few wealthier citizens to take the longer (and marketed as more romantic) journey across Salus. Touted as luxury compartments, the truly rich would consider them basic fare, leaving only the middle classes to find them mildly acceptable. The poorest members of society would probably find them opulent; such are their regular living conditions.

The large compartments contain two plush benches, which convert into beds. Between these is a fold up table. The smaller compartments contain only a single bench, though it serves adequately as a bed. Note that even traveling "first class," train passengers must share a communal lavatory-cum-shower room.

"Dining facilities" comprise vending machines, which dispense a variety of tasteless soft drinks and alcoholic beverages, and snacks and pull-ring-to-heat "luxury" meals. Most of the meals have never been anywhere near real meat or vegetables, being comprised almost entirely of protein substitutes and vitamin paste.

Four corpses lie in the car, two in the corridor, one in the compartment by the toilet, and one in the smaller compartment on the opposite side. All have been shot with flechette rounds (shot by the two guards).

Two zombies are in this car. One is patrolling the corridor, while the other is guarding the forward waiting area. Both lack the brains to use developed tactics, being very much "spray the area with flechette" types.

Zombies (2): See page 195.

PASSENGER CAR

Most citizens who travel by train between territories do so because they can't afford airfares. The freight trains provide an alternate, and cheap, means of transportation, but it's strictly a no-thrills ride. The bulk of each passenger car, as evidenced in the diagram, is a communal empty space, where passengers can sit, lie, or stand. The front compartment contains small seats, but these are far from comfortable. There are no refreshment facilities—passengers must supply their own food and drink.

The passenger cars contain a total of 16 corpses. All have been shot with flechette weapons. A Notice roll made while performing a thorough examination reveals a lot more

blood and flechette holes than accounts for the number of corpses. For instance, there is clear evidence of blood holes and pockmarks against the walls, indicating a victim was standing there, but there is no body nearby. These corpses were raised as zombies through necromancy.

Only the passenger car nearest the armored car is guarded. Two of these zombies are in the main passenger bay, one is in the seated area, and the other is in the forward waiting area.

Zombies (4): See page 195.

ARMORED CAR

The inclusion of an armored car on freight trains is a formality, followed to toe the Church line that all installations, mobile or static, must have a security force. Most freight companies save money by hiring the absolute minimum staff stipulated by law—two. This train was no exception.

Unfortunately, the two hirelings were actually Rephaim agents, planted by the zombie lord months ago. They helped smuggle the Rephaim aboard, and then, at the appointed hour, turned their guns on the passengers. Malifex, who wanted the passengers alive so he could use his Sire ability, rewarded his minions with eternal life as zombies.

Inside the armored car is a holding tank, seats for the security troops, and a row of screens linked to the onboard security cameras. All the cameras have been destroyed save one—the one showing the Rephaim's reason for capturing the train (see page 164).

There's also a small armory, but it's empty. Knights making a Notice roll deduce it once held two each of SMGs, spare magazines, and a grenade launcher. Given the likelihood of a Rephaim attack would be small, the grenades were probably stun and baton rounds, designed to incapacitate troublesome passengers or stowaways.

The two former heretics and High Exarch Malifex, the zombie lord mastermind behind the hijacking, occupy the armored car. Unless the Knights make a lot of noise (like lobbing grenades or causing explosions), the Rephaim can be taken by Surprise.

There are two doors, one on each end, but these are protected by a coded entry system which doesn't react to the Knights' ID tags. Cracking the code requires 10 minutes and a Lockpicking roll. After three failed attempts, the doors seal and can only be opened from within.

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Climbing onto the roof is easy enough, so long as the Knights use something to stand on. Once on the top, they discover an unlocked hatch. A ladder allows access to the interior (security troops sit on the roof with binoculars, normally, scanning the horizon for trouble).

High Exarch Malifix: See page 193.

Zombies (2): See page 195.

THE REAL DANGER

The true threat aboard the train isn't actually the chemicals. Although they are highly explosive, the Rephaim have placed a far more useful device on board.

On one of the flatbeds (#1 or #18, whichever is furthest from where the heroes board) is a primitive rocket. Contained inside panels around the nosecone are glass spheres, each containing green gas. The gas is a necromantic heavier-than-air weapon. Inhaling it infects living victims with the same sort of toxin as carried by diseased zombies (variant I).

Unfortunately, the Rephaim don't know much about guidance systems, so their best hope of getting it into the heart of a human city was on one of the trains. Their plan is simple—drive the train into the station, launch the rocket, and detonate the small warhead, releasing the gas over the city. As it sinks to earth, it will be breathed by thousands, maybe tens of thousands, of humans.

Detecting the panels is automatic if the Knights closely inspect the rocket, but requires a Notice roll as an action from a distance of 2" or more. Unscrewing any of the six panels requires four actions—one action per screw. Analyzing the gas is impossible without a laboratory, but the Knights are free to speculate.

Removing a sphere requires an Agility roll as an action. On a failure, the sphere shatters (they are *extremely* fragile), releasing a Medium Burst Template of gas. Everyone under the template not using a respirator must make a Vigor roll or contract the virus. See the Diseased Zombie Variant I from the *Necropolis 2351-55 Update* for details.

Any hero carrying a sphere who is hit by a weapon or by a litany with a damaging effect, regardless of whether or not he takes damage, or who rolls a 1 on his Agility die (regardless of Wild Die), must draw a card from the action deck. A black suit means the globe breaks.

Although the rocket is tied to the freight car to prevent it falling over in transit, there is nothing to prevent the heroes from simply throwing it over the side of the train or torching it with a flamethrower from a safe distance.

ZOMBIES

Guarding the flatbed are the zombie lord's initial squad of zombies. Malifix has given these special training, and they are capable of using cover and performing basic tactical maneuvers (like never standing in the open and making themselves an easy target).

Typically, the zombies seek cover as quickly as possible, once foes are detected. Four of them lean out from cover, fire, and duck back down on their action card, forcing enemies to go on Hold to shoot them. The remaining pair seek cover while laying down fire on their first action card, but then go on Hold. They interrupt opponents trying to make their way toward their position or who are about to launch grenades.

Once the enemy gets close, all the remaining zombies fire a final burst (at -2 for taking two actions), drop their guns, and draw their swords (an action), ready for melee.

Elite Zombies (6): See page 195. In addition, one has a Brimstone grenade loaded with three baton rounds (Range: 10/20/40, Damage: 2d6 nonlethal) and two stun grenades (Range: 20/40/80, Damage: victims must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken, Medium Burst Template)

AFTERMATH

This adventure can end one of several ways.

First, the Knights wipe out the Rephaim and destroy the rocket. Once the jammer is off, the freight company sends the override signal, which stops the train. A pair of Angels supported by an Archangel arrives on the scene a few minutes later (having been waiting over the horizon). The Knights can congratulate themselves on a job well done, and the Lazarites get a new weapon to study (assuming it wasn't ditched overboard).

Second, the Knights miss the train at the mining town. The Knights might be able to catch another Angel, but if they do, time should be really against them when they board the train. Give them maybe 10 or 15 minutes of

game time to check the train before it reaches the point of no return and the Church sends in the bombers.

Alternately, the WM can use the heroes' failure to start a new mini-campaign—no second team is available, the bombers miss the train, and the rocket launches, infecting thousands of citizens. Within a week, the city is crawling with infectious zombies.

Third, the Knights board the train but get killed. The WM's options are as above. However, since the team screwed up, having the zombies rise up in the city gives their replacements a chance to atone for their comrades' failure.

Fourth, by some quirk of timing, the Knights are still onboard after 30 minutes but haven't deactivated the jammer. The choices for the WM are simple—blow up the train or give the Knights a few more minutes. The Ordines are usually pretty good at meeting deadlines in these situations, so it's up to WM how generous he wants to be.

THE STRANGE CASE OF MRS. BETTS

What begins as a regular hearts and minds operation quickly turns into a surreal tea party, which in turn leads the Knights on the hunt for a murderer and organlegger.

Rank: Seasoned (25–30 XP).

BRIEFING

The adventure begins in the briefing room at the Knights' Preceptory. Read or paraphrase the following information to the Knights.

We've had repeated calls from a concerned citizen that one of her neighbors is acting strangely. Normally we'd throw this to the Lictor Sergeants to handle, but the Preceptor Master has decided Knights need to be involved.

According to the reports, made by one Ms. Constance McNally, her elderly neighbor, Mrs. Elizabeth Betts, lives alone, but recently has been taking delivery of copious amounts of food. There could be many valid reasons for this, but McNally insists her neighbor never has visitors. Sounds like a curtain twitcher seeing what she wants to see, but we're duty bound to investigate.

Mrs. Betts is a rich widower. Her husband was some bigwig back on Earth before the Final Exodus. He died shortly after arriving on Salus, and his wife has been a recluse ever since. She's worth millions, donates heavily to various Preceptory projects, and is a vocal supporter of the Pope. Treat her with utmost respect at all times.

So pay Mrs. Betts a visit, and find out what's going on. I'll expect this case closed and a report on my desk by lunchtime.

Enemy Forces: *Mrs. Betts is well into her nineties. We don't think she'll give you much trouble.*

Support: *Unless an elderly woman is packing a lot of firepower, we don't think you'll need much backup on this one. Anyway, you won't be far from the Preceptory if anything goes awry. You'll be issued a Prophet APC if you've got a certified driver on the team. Otherwise you'll have to catch a lift with a Lance heading into town.*

Equipment: *Lose the heavy firepower for this one. This is a hearts and minds operation in friendly territory, so keep your rifles and SMGs slung when talking to Mrs. Betts. But do take a stunner, just in case the old girl is high on drugs or something—wilder crap has happened.*

The briefing officer has nothing more to add. When the Knights are ready to move out, proceed to the next section.

MRS. BETTS

The Knights can conduct a little research on Mrs. Betts before leaving the Preceptory if they so wish. Her house, a sprawling Gothic mansion, is located on several acres ground, in the exclusive neighborhood of the local town. As the briefing officer said, she's in her nineties, is extremely wealthy, and remains an active member of the local community. According to the last census, she is attended by her butler—Woodes—but has no other staff.

DEAD GIRLS

The Betts mansion has seen better days. The perimeter walls of the estate are heavily overgrown with ivy and climbing weeds, the front gates are rusted, the garden looks like it hasn't been tended in years, and the

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brickwork of the mansion is crumbling. There's no buzzer on the iron gates, nor does there seem to be any lock.

Before the Knights can enter the premises, a middle-aged woman, wearing binoculars around her neck, runs up to them, glancing furtively left and right. She presses herself against one of the walls, out of view of the gates.

"I'm Ms. McNally, the one who reported Mrs. Betts' strange activity. You should have been here a few minutes ago—Mrs. Betts received a delivery from the local bakery. Trays of sandwiches and cakes, if I'm not much mistaken," she says, patting her binoculars. She lowers her voice before continuing. "I think she's keeping a heretic cell in her basement. Keeping them hidden until the time is right for them to prey on us innocent and God-fearing citizens."

McNally is the typical nosey neighbor. She's watched far too many documentaries, newsreels, dramas, and citizen advice broadcasts about heretics. She is easily pacified by promises the matter will be fully investigated, but unless ordered she doesn't go home—she leans around the corner of the wall and peers into the house with her binoculars.

I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU

The gates are unlocked, and creak open if pushed. When the Knights reach Mrs. Betts front door, they discover a sign hanging outside. Unlike the rest of the house, this appears relatively new, with minimal signs of weathering. It reads, "The Betts Home for Homeless Girls." Knights who contact the Preceptory about this are informed no such business or charity has been registered with the Preceptor Estate Manager's office.

A few moments after knocking or ringing the bell the door opens a crack. A wizened face peers out for a second, and then the door opens fully.

Framed in the door is an elderly woman, pince-nez glasses perched on the end of a long nose. Her deep wrinkles and gray hair indicate she is a woman of considerable age. Her eyes narrow briefly, and then open wide, as if in sudden recognition.

"Oh, most excellent!" she beams, clapping her hands together rapidly. "Gentlemen, do come in. The girls have been expecting you. I must say, you are a most rugged lot. Please, please, come inside."

She indicates a coat stand just inside the door. "Please leave your bats and cloaks here."

Mrs. Betts is mad. She isn't dangerously psychotic, but her marble bag has definitely got some holes. She has mistaken the Knights for young gentlemen, come to teach her girls how to dance. No amount of persuasion, cajoling, repeating facts, shouting, or threatening can convince her otherwise. Her mind has blanked out the sight of swords and armor, instead seeing walking canes and cloaks from a bygone age.

If there's a female Knight in the party, Mrs. Betts has a few words to say. *"A lady? They sent me a lady? Well, I don't know what sort of thing goes on in the city, but my girls are most definitely not into that sort of thing. You may watch, my dear, but you cannot participate. I simply won't allow it!"*

Mrs. Betts won't let the Knights any further into the house until they have placed their canes (words) and cloaks (armor) in the relevant positions. That means stripping down to combat fatigues. Strangely, the old lady makes no comments about guns or grenades. Of course, the Knights can simply shove their way past Mrs. Betts, but that isn't part of a hearts and minds operation involving a wealthy donator to the cause.

Once "suitably attired," the Knights are shown through to the dining room.

THIS JUST GOT WEIRD

As you enter the dining room, the overpowering smell of perfume assails your nostrils. On a large table a small feast of sandwiches, cake, and fresh fruit has been laid out. The table is set for 16 places. Seated around it are a dozen figures, all wearing dresses, long gloves, and full veils. "Girls," Mrs. Betts says, clapping her hands once as if to attract the diners' attention, "these are the young men I was talking about." Not one of the seated figures responds in the slightest way.

Mrs. Betts then gestures to the empty places and invites the Knights to sit. She takes a seat at the head of the table.

Mrs. Betts pours tea for the girls seated near her. "Cake, my dear?" she asks one. Again, there is no reply. "Oh, Amelia," she says, "you mustn't be so shy. How will you ever find a rich husband unless you learn

to speak up for yourself? Here, have a cream bun." The old lady places a cake in front of the figure to her left.

Sooner or later, probably sooner, a Knight is going to take a closer look at one of the girls. Lifting a veil reveals a worm-eaten corpse! Have the Knight makes a Guts roll to avoid the effects of Fear. From here on, there's no script—the Knights are going to have to handle this as they see fit.

MRS. BETTS IS MAD

The "girls" are all dead, but they're not zombies, nor were they killed by Mrs. Betts. Extremely senile and confused, Mrs. Betts was being driven through town by her butler, when she spotted a pair of legs sticking out from beneath a pile of cardboard boxes in a back alley. She ordered Woodes to stop the car, and she went to investigate.

In her confused state, she believed the corpse she discovered was a homeless girl. Being of charitable nature, she took the waif home and began to care for her. On a whim, she returned to the same spot a few days later, and found another body, and then another, and another. Over a few weeks, she had "rescued" a dozen "girls," and so founded her home for homeless girls. Mrs. Betts has no concept that the girls are dead or otherwise abnormal—she's that mad.

Woodes, the butler, isn't quite as insane, but he's just as elderly and wants to make his mistress' remaining years as comfortable as possible. If that means putting up with a few stinking corpses in the house, then so be it.

MISTAKES HAPPEN

The hearts were removed by a Necrolatrist doctor. He donates them to his masters as power packs for necromantic weapons. According to the arrangements, he'd perform the operations and leave the bodies to be collected by other heretics in town. The two parties don't communicate directly, which has led to a problem.

The doctor is dumping the corpses as promised, but Mrs. Betts is removing most of them before the other heretics find them. The doctor, having heard nothing about corpses being discovered by the authorities, believes his comrades are doing their part in disposing of them. The body handlers, on the other hand, aren't finding many corpses when they go to

the drop point, so they're under the impression the doctor hasn't found many suitable specimens.

All the victims are prostitutes or homeless girls. Their disappearances go unreported (such girls often move around without warning), leaving no trail of missing persons. Tracking down all the girls' identities and informing next of kin is a laborious process, and one handled by the Lictors once the corpses are delivered into their hands from Mrs. Betts' house.

UNCOVERING FACTS

Mrs. Betts denies anything is seriously wrong with her girls. Possible comments and questions by Knights are given below, along with the old girl's replies.

Q: This girl is dead!

A: *"Nonsense, young man. She's just a little peaky. The weather has turned most inclement."*

Q: She's decomposing! Can't you smell it?

A: *"She has eczema, but I admit she does whiff a little. A life on the street does not allow for regular hygiene."*

Q: None of them are eating or drinking.

A: *"My girls are polite. They nibble, but never gorge. Anyway, they are just shy. It isn't often we receive guests. Give them time, and they'll come round."*

Q: Where do you find your girls?

A: *"In town. There's a dumpster in a small alleyway. It must be a popular place for them to sleep, because I found all my girls there."*

Q: All at the same time?

A: *"Dear me, no. I rescued them over the space of a few weeks. I'd pop back on the off chance, and there'd usually be one there, fast asleep."*

Q: How did you get them back?

A: *"Woodes, by butler, helps me. A lovely man, so devoted to me since my husband passed away."*

Trying to inspect one of the girls for cause of death means taking off clothing, and Mrs. Betts isn't going to put up with that sort of improper behavior. She threatens to call the heroes' parents if they persist. Knights can get around this with a very good excuse, but this should be roleplayed, not left to die rolls. Being a medic, for instance, allows a Knight to claim he's a doctor, and allows him to check

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the girl's neck for swelling symptomatic of flu (Mrs. Betts did mention the inclement weather making the girls feel peaky).

Unfortunately, she's influential enough to have the Preceptor Master's office on speed dial, and in her confused state she dials it if no excuses are forthcoming. The Master listens to her complaints, then asks to speak to the Knights. Once told the facts, he orders Mrs. Betts gently restrained and sedated while the Knights do their duty.

The cause of death is not immediately obvious. There are no cut throats, caved in skulls, flechette wounds, or other signs of trauma. A full body examination reveals each corpse has been hacked open and crudely stitched back together, but this was done postmortem. Checking inside one of the corpses (someone might) reveals each is missing their heart. A Notice roll at -4, made while checking the corpses, reveals a tiny bruise on each one, usually in the neck or upper arm. In the center of each bruise is a small hole, the sort left by a hypodermic.

The old lady has, in her eyes, nothing to hide, so if questioned about the location of the alley she happily provides it. *"It's nice to see young gentlemen taking an interest in the homeless," she smiles. "Another cup of tea?"*

THE BUTLER'S STORY

Woodes, the butler, is in the kitchen, but makes an appearance at some point in the proceedings. When he sees the Knights he drops the tray of candied fruits he was carrying. He makes no attempt to run, but instead seems quite resigned as he approaches the Knights. He holds out his hands.

"It's my fault," he says. "I know I should have reported the bodies to the Lictors, but milady seemed so intent on caring for them. The doctors diagnosed her with a rare form of brain tumor. It affects her behavior. I just wanted to make her last years as comfortable as possible, and she was set upon caring for these...girls."

Whether the Knights decide to arrest Mrs. Betts and/or Woodes is up to them. Although laws have been broken and crimes concealed, the strange pair are not actually involved in the murder of the girls. The Preceptor Master, if his advice is required, suggest the Knights move on in their investigation, promising he'll handle this delicate situation personally, after consulting with the local Field Master.

ANOTHER CORPSE

Woodes can provide directions to the dumpster where all the corpses were discovered—Mrs. Betts' memory isn't up to the task. If the town is large (100,000+ souls), the Knights need to make a Common Knowledge roll or check in with the Preceptory about nearby locations of interest. Otherwise, the place is small enough they know the general area. With success, or automatic knowledge, they know the alley is in a middle class area of town, two blocks from St. Jerome Hospital.

When the Knights arrive on the scene, they discover a fresh corpse sticking out from beneath cardboard boxes. A successful Healing roll indicates the girl is fresh, probably only a few hours old at most. Bruising on her neck is clearly visible, and indicates a needle puncture. Like all the others, she has stitch marks indicating organs were removed.

A postmortem is required to learn further information, and that can't be done on the streets. The postmortem reveals the heart and the adjoining arteries have been removed with great skill. Blood test analysis indicates mild levels of alcohol and nicotine, but a high dose of DHM (dihydroalkamoxitine), a powerful sedative used in most hospital surgical operations. The drug is strictly licensed, and misuse carries a mandatory five-year jail sentence and loss of license to practice. Additionally, few quacks and backstreet doctors can afford it, so they make do with lesser drugs.

Fingerprint, retina scan, and DNA sequencing produce a name—Maxine Huckley, a local prostitute with several minor convictions. Her parents live in Church-controlled territory (rather than on a Preceptory estate), so the Knights don't have the job of informing them of their daughter's death. A quick call gets the local priest, Father Daniels, to tell them the bad news. Huckley's rap sheet includes an address.

TALKING TO HER FRIENDS

Huckley shared a rented room with two other working girls, Stacey Keane and Nadine Klump. Both girls are in if the Knights pay a visit. There are a few packets of illegal drugs in the house, so the door is immediately slammed in the Knights' faces, and the process of flushing them down the toilet begins. The door has Toughness 8 and needs to be battered down (there's a deadbolt on the inside).

Intimidation won't get them to open the door, but informing them the Knights' are here investigating Huckley's death allows a Persuasion roll. With success, the girls open the door on the condition the team won't bust them for prostitution or drug abuse. It's the Knights call whether they agree honestly to the terms or agree as an excuse to gain entry and then throw the book at them. A raise opens the door immediately.

The interrogation is handled through likely questions posed by the Knights and the girls' answers. Before the ladies answer any questions, they want to know how their friend died. The Knights are under no obligation to tell them.

Q: When did you see her last?

A: *"Yesterday... yesterday evening. She went out to work her patch at 1900 hours, as normal. She was due back this morning around dawn, but never turned up. We figured she'd been offered an all-day special. You know, extra money for extra company."*

Q: Do you know any of her clients?

A: *"No, we work different patches. She had a few regulars she mentioned, but no specific details."*

Q: Where was her patch?

A: *"East side of town, outside the train station. She had a thing about businessmen, and figured that was the best place to book up with them. We prefer to stick to the local patch—plenty of doctors needing attention."*



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Local Knights know the location of the main station—it's across town from the hospital. Huckley was therefore either working a different patch (untrue), or was dumped across town after her heart was removed (true).

Q: Can you identify any girls working the same patch?

A: *"I think she works with Tall Sally. I don't know Sally by any other name, and Max never described her. I don't know any of the other girls."*

TALL SALLY

Tall Sally is 4' 9" tall, plump, approaching middle age like an express train, and well past her beauty days. When the Knights arrive, Sally acts casual—she isn't in the act of securing a client, so she's not breaking any major laws. If approached, she immediately says she's waiting for a friend due in on the next train, thereby avoiding loitering laws.

Once she hears of Huckley's death, she whistles quietly. *"Wow, Maxine as well. I told her to stick to her regulars."* Further questioning is handled through possible questions and Sally's answers.

Q: Did you know Huckley well?

A: *"We weren't buddies or anything. We walked the same beat, is all. A quick bello and we were done with small talk."*

Q: Why did you say, "Maxine as well"?

A: *"Typical Knights, avoiding the real issues at home because of their great war. Three girls, long-time pros with a good client list, all vanished in the last few weeks. I figured they'd been murdered/ It's an occupational hazard, honey."*

Q: Did you know of these missing girls?

A: *"Not by name. Just face, you know. They all worked hereabouts."*

Q: Did you see Huckley with anyone last night? Maybe a new client?

A: *"Hmmm, her first client was Father John. He ain't a real priest, of course. More a sugar daddy than a standard client. Maxine always said he treated her real good. Then she was back here for a spell. Yeab, she left about 2200 hours. Some guy in a car pulled up. Maxine said she'd seen him around here a few times, but she's never...well, you know. Wasn't a face I recognized, but I attract a certain kind of guy."*

Q: Can you remember anything about the man or his car?

A: *"You know, I'd hold out for some sort of payment for you eating into my work time, but I know you suckers ain't got any money. How about you cut me some slack next time I get picked up for working? We got a deal?"*

Sally's trying her luck—the Knights have the legal authority to haul her in for questioning and apply rough arm interrogation methods, and she knows it. Whether she's threatened or secures a deal, she recalls a few important facts.

"Lemme see now. He was dark-haired. That's about all I saw of him—he never left the car, and the streetlights here are intermittent. He drove one of them flashy cars, a sports car—that's it, he drove a black Speedbird. Latest model and all. It had a permit or something in the window saying he worked at the hospital across town. St. Jerome's I think it is."

VEHICLE CHECK

The Preceptory or the local Lictor precinct house can run a check on all black Speedbirds registered in the city. One result produces a good match—a Dr. Abel Miller, a surgeon at St. Jerome's, owns one. It's black, and it's the latest model.

ENTER THE DOCTOR

If the Knights go to Doctor Miller's house or try to call him at home, they learn he's at work. Mrs. Miller says her husband works long hours on private cases, often into the early hours. She doesn't expect him home until he turns up on the doorstep. Mrs. Miller knows nothing about her husband's extracurricular operations and is a devout supporter of the Church. Mrs. Miller vehemently denies the possibility her husband could be involved in anything illegal or immoral, claiming him to be a pillar of the community. She offers the suggestion that he loaned his car to a friend.

On arriving at the hospital, have the Knights make a Notice roll at -2. With success, they see a man matching Dr. Miller's description, getting into a black Speedbird. Unfortunately, he's on the other side of the car park, and he doesn't have to pass them to exit. If the Knights have a Prophet, they can give chase immediately. Otherwise, they need to commandeer a vehicle from the car park. Luckily, one is just pulling up. See **The Chase** below. On a failed Notice roll, Dr. Miller escapes unseen.

THE DOC'S OFFICE

Inquiries in the hospital lead the Lance to Miller's office. His secretary, Dolores Mayweather, a battleaxe of a lady, informs the Knights the doctor has left for the day. She doesn't know where he's going.

Getting past the secretary into the empty office requires an Intimidation roll—she doesn't respond to kind words or flattery. Sticking a gun in her face or threatening her with a short spell in a labor camp is worth a +2 bonus. With success, she reluctantly allows the Knights access, but warns them not to disturb anything. Knights worrying about the need for a warrant should be told they don't need one—such formalities went out the door when the Third Reformation Church came to power.

The office contains all the usual trappings one might find in a doctor's office, including a computer linked to the hospital network. Discovering anything of interest on the system requires a password. Dolores can provide it if asked, or a Knight with a technical background, such as a Combat Engineer, can make a Common Knowledge roll at -2. Three failed rolls locks the system. To unlock it, the Knights have to wait for the IT department to arrive (an hour unless overt threats are made).

Once through the security, a Knight may make an Investigation roll. Success locates the doctor's diary. On a dozen or so days it records "Private Patient" with an "X" beside each entry. The last entry is this morning! The other dates match those when Mrs. Betts found the corpses in the alley. The diary lists an appointment for this evening, though the entry doesn't yet have a cross beside it.

Dolores doesn't know much about Miller's private work. She remembers he has a private surgery across town, which he sometimes uses for private work. Some of his patients, she says, are nervous about going into a hospital. She has never visited, but she provides the address.

THE CHASE

Miller's sports car begins three Range Increments ahead of the Knights, and each Range Increment equates to 5". Stats for the Speedbird and a generic car (required if the heroes commandeer a car) are provided below. Because this is a Chase, the Acceleration rating is not required. The chase takes place on the city streets, and there are Rough Obstacles (-2) representing other road users.

However, unless the Knights make their presence known, Miller doesn't react to being followed, even if the Knights are in a Prophet. He may be up to his neck in Rephaim servitude, but Miller is a cool customer and believes he has his back covered. Each round, he drives normally, making no stunts or maneuvers. Because he isn't speeding or driving erratically, he ignores any Club suits.

Knights in a Prophet can try and get the doctor to pull over as a stunt. They must be within one Range Increment as normal and succeed in an Intimidation roll. This might represent flashing the APC's lights or tooting the horn to attract Miller's attention. Maintaining the image of a law-abiding citizen, the doctor does as requested.

Should the Knights be in an unmarked car and start harassing the doctor, such as the methods above or by waving guns to attract his attention, Miller assumes the heroes are potential carjackers and puts his foot down. Now the regular chase rules apply—Miller's only plan is to escape by driving as fast as possible, though he will use Distract and Force stunts if the opportunity presents itself.

SPEEDBIRD

The Venator Speedbird is sleek, fast, and expensive. It's the sort of car driven by media stars in the Union. The Speedbird is based heavily on the Outremer Firebird, though its engine is not as powerful. With Union vehicles heavily taxed in Church territories, the Speedbird is a cheaper alternative.

Top Speed: 56; **Toughness:** 10 (3); **Handling:** +1; **Crew:** 1+3
Notes: Airbags

GENERIC FAMILY CAR

Top Speed: 40; **Toughness:** 11 (3); **Handling:** +0; **Crew:** 1+4
Notes: Airbags

QUESTIONING MILLER

If Miller stops, or is forcibly stopped, he asks what is going on. He is polite, but tries to avoid leaving his car, making feeble excuses ("The door is stuck") as long as possible. Eventually he'll either run out of excuses or the Knights will drag him out. Despite the circumstantial evidence, there is little to link Miller to any crime.

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Possible lines of questioning and Miller's answers are detailed below. Patting down Miller finds the usual—wallet with money and photos of the family, driving license, and so on—and a key.

Q: Do you know a prostitute by the name of Maxine Huxley?

A: "No. I'm a happily married man."

Q: You were seen picking her up outside the train station. Sure you don't know her?

A: "Okay, I do. Look, I have a stressful job, and Maxine helps relieve my tension. I'll pay the fine, but I'd prefer it if this stayed out of the courts. I have a reputation to protect."

Q: Maxine is dead. Were you involved?

A: "Dead? She was a pretty thing. But no, I wasn't involved! How could you even insinuate that? We had a good time; I dropped her back at the station afterward. I haven't seen her since."

Q: You do a lot of private work. Is that common for a surgeon?

A: "I earn a little extra doing minor cosmetic surgery. It's all strictly above board."

Q: We need the names of your patients. We have some questions for them.

A: "Sorry, I can't do that. Doctor-patient confidentiality, you know."

Q: What does this key open?

A: "A post box down at the post office near the hospital. Sometimes I need to send material out to patients, but it's cheaper to do a bulk delivery. I store my stuff there until I have enough."

Q: Any objections if we search your private surgery?

A: "Would it make a difference if I said no? I know you don't need a warrant. I do demand my lawyer be present, though. Mind if I call her?"

The Knights know that Miller is within his rights to have a lawyer present. Only if they arrest him for heresy is that right forfeited, and if they do that they are legally required to inform the Inquisition, who promptly take over the investigation. The heroes' part in the adventure is now over. Miller is eventually found guilty and executed, but the Rephaim part in the plot goes undiscovered.

WE LOST HIM

While it's possible the Knights might lose Miller during the chase, it's more likely he avoids them as they enter the hospital. In this case, the Knights know his home address.

Miller, however, is not at home. His wife claims she hasn't seen him all day and isn't expecting him back until later, as he has a private patient. Knights who haven't questioned Dolores learn the location of his private surgery from his wife before they depart.



SURGICAL MALPRACTICE

This scene can happen one of two ways. First, the Knights haven't arrested Miller for anything and make an appearance at his private surgery. In this instance, the deranged surgeon is just about to cut open a prostitute's ribcage when the Knights enter. A fight is likely to ensue, immediately. This is detailed below.

Second, the Knights arrest Miller after a short chase and drag him here. In this case, the Knights enter the surgery to find a woman already unconscious and strapped to the operating table! Miller and his lawyer, actually his handler, fight the heroes.

Miller's first action is to grab a laser scalpel. If he's already doing surgery, he has one to hand. Otherwise he has to snatch one off the operating table. Activating it is a free action, but grabbing it is not. The lawyer requires an action to open his briefcase, but can draw his 12mm pistol as a free action, thanks to his Quick Draw Edge and the way the pistol is stored.

The doctor fights to the death, believing that his death will be prevented by his masters. He's wrong—if it looks like Miller is about to fall unconscious, his lawyer executes him. Should Miller become Incapacitated, the lawyer uses a Finishing Move to silence the maniacal surgeon. Next round, the lawyer shoves the pistol into his own mouth and pulls the trigger—since he isn't resisting, this is a Finishing Move.

Dr. Miller: See page 193.

The Lawyer: See page 194.

THE KEY

The key Miller carries does indeed open a post office box. There are no papers inside, however. The only object inside is a small box, about 6" to a side which is cold to the touch. Any hero with Healing automatically knows what the object is—it's a storage container for live organs. Stored inside is a human heart (ripped from Maxine Huckleby).

Miller placed the heart here for his masters to collect, but they have yet to do so. The Knights can stake out the post office in the hopes of catching whoever is behind the scam. It should be obvious to them now that the surgeon might have been doing the operations, but he didn't place the heart here for his own amusement—it's here to be collected.

Several hours later, a black car pulls up outside the post office. Four men in long coats climb out. Two enter the post office, while

two remain watchful outside. Any Knight with experience as a Scout knows the goons are professionals by the way they scan the crowd for potential trouble. One man remains inside the car. All are Dark Knights.

How the goons react depends on whether the Knights left the heart in place. If the medical container is inside the locker, the Dark Knights pick it up and get back into their vehicle. If the post office box is empty, the two inside return outside and confer briefly with their comrades. Regardless of whether they have the heart or not, they then drive away.

Following the Dark Knights without being detected isn't easy. Have the Knight driving the Lance's vehicle make a Driving roll opposed by a Group Notice roll from the Dark Knights. The heroes have a -6 penalty if they're driving a Prophet. With success, the Lance tails the Dark Knights back to their lair—an old school, now long abandoned. On a failure, they are spotted and the Dark Knights open fire.

Run the rest of the scene as a Chase. The Dark Knights begin three Range Increments ahead of the Knights, and each Range Increment equates to 5". This area of town has little traffic, so Obstacles are Sparse (-1).

Dark Knight Officer (1): See page 192.

Dark Knights (4): See page 192.

POST OFFICE RUMBLE

Some groups may wish to try and arrest the Dark Knights at the post office. The soldiers are well-trained and carry powerful ballistic weapons, capable of shredding the Knights' armor—it won't be an easy engagement.

Worse still, there are a lot of innocent bystanders around. For the first three rounds of combat, any Shooting die which comes up 1, regardless of the Wild Die, hits an innocent citizen (Toughness 5). The villains' car is as per the one on page 169. If a firefight erupts outside, they use it for cover.

Interrupting the Dark Knights in their duty has more serious repercussions than the possibility of a few dead citizens. The Rephaim are naturally quite paranoid when operating inside a Church city. When the Dark Knights, who aren't easily distracted from their duties, don't return in a timely fashion, the vile creature behind the plot packs up and ships out. By the time the Knights break the insane troopers and get any information from them, it's too late to bring the ringleader to justice. The adventure is over (and the Knights receive a severe dressing down for their hasty actions).

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THE DARK LAIR

Now the Knights know where the lair is; they can call for backup. Within 20 minutes, a Prophet APC, carrying a rapid response Lance of Lictor-Sergeants armed as regular Sergeants, arrives on the scene. Hand out Ally Sheets among the players.

The true villain, a young vampire by the name of Calvorix, has his lair in the old refectory. The former dining hall has been converted into a workshop, where Calvorix is experimenting with new forms of weird science. Among the many devices, none of which currently work, is a prototype *fear* generator. It is based on the same principal as the Banshee defense system, but should, if made operational, affect a much larger area (like an entire city block). His plan is to finish the weapon and then arrange for a major attack on the city.

The lair is 12" to a side. The floor is covered in tables (2" long and 1" wide). A set of double doors in the south wall lead into the refectory from the main school block, while a single door in the north wall leads into the old kitchen.

Calvorix is overconfident, but not suicidal. He runs if the situation goes bad, knowing he can always continue his great work elsewhere. His bodyguards loyally stay behind to thwart pursuers.

Primus Pilus Calvorix: See page 193.

Dark Knight Officer (1): See page 192.

Dark Knights (4): See page 192.

AFTERMATH

Once Calvorix and his Dark Knights are dead, the case is closed. The Lazarites are informed of the find and quickly secure the school, forbidding any other Ordines from entering. The Knights are congratulated on a job well done, though the Lazarites remain aloof as usual, refusing to do more than acknowledge the Knights played a part in the discovery of new Rephaim technology.

Mrs. Betts and her butler are not charged with any crimes. The Pope personally contacts the old lady and convinces her to close down her school, telling her the "young ladies" are now capable of surviving in the big world. Instead, she is persuaded to use her vast fortune to open an actual school for disadvantaged citizens.

If the WM wishes, the Pope can visit the town, perhaps meeting briefly with the Knights to thank them in person for their role in the affair. Such a visit should not be a casual comment at the end of the adventure, but played up as a major moment in the heroes' lives.

ICE STATION ZULU

Unlike other adventures, this one has no defined timeline or sequence of events, save for one. The heroes are free to do as they please, and it is left to the GM to provide the necessary air of growing tension. The GM should read the adventure through carefully at least once before play, in order to have a good idea of the base layout, the equipment available to the characters, and how he will plan the creature's attacks. Likewise, there are no NPCs for the group to interact with. All roleplaying must therefore come from party interaction.

Rank: Seasoned (25–30 XP).

WM'S NOTES

The Asgard station is not involved in meteorological or geological research. Asgard has secretly been working on reinventing the FC Drive. Although Asgard (among others) had engineers on Salus who knew how to repair the star drives, none were ever involved in the manufacturing process. After years of trial and error, Asgard finally produced a small prototype. At best it would power an unmanned probe, but it's a vital step toward rediscovering the full technology and giving mankind a chance to escape its fate.

The scientists at the base cranked the FC Drive to a mere 50% of its full power, enough to create a low level and extremely local distortion in space-time, but far below the power needed to initiate a jump (tests centuries ago proved categorically that opening a space-time portal on planet was disastrous).

Unfortunately, the energy field was enough to create a momentary blip in the black hole. A demon leaked through into the universe right at the point the FC field was created. Then it did what it does best—create havoc.

GUTS ROLLS

The Knights are hardened soldiers who have witnessed all manner of Rephaim and the destruction and vileness of which they are capable. However, there is a difference between blood-and-guts, to which the Knights are largely

accustomed, and psychological terror, to which they are not. Guts rolls to avoid Fear should be commonplace in this adventure.

There is a thin line between using Guts rolls to add effect and making them monotonous. Ideally, create an atmosphere of fear, slowly, relying on roleplaying and good descriptions first. Keep the rolls for moments when the characters would likely be scared. Having the Knights talk to one of the Asgard staff (through the demon's *illusion* power), and then later have them stumble across the corpse obviously incapable of having spoken with them is worthy of a Guts check.

Because this is essentially one big scene, the affects of Fear last for an hour. Failing another Guts roll within that timeframe adds another hour to the duration.

BRIEFING

This adventure begins on Terra Septentriones, Salus' most northern continent. The Knights have been rotated out of frontline duties, and for the last month have been acting as security at a Church scientific research station, deep inside the Arctic Circle. Life has been boring in the extreme, the repetitive nature of patrolling corridors and the base perimeter, broken only be the occasional chance to scare off a curious polar bear (the species was imported to Salus centuries ago, to prevent their extinction on Earth).

The adventure assumes the year is 2352. It is fall in the northern hemisphere, the nights are getting steadily longer, and the average temperature is a chilly -18F (20 degrees colder at night).

The Knights are summoned to the office of the base administrator, Sven Calpurna. Although he's a civilian and the Knights represent the military, they come under his jurisdiction for the duration of their tour. He hasn't interfered in their tactics regarding base security, and the Knights have had no reason to grumble—the staff has treated them with respect and placed no undue demands on their time.

Calpurna greets the Knights warmly, flicks on a video monitor, and then leaves the office. A fuzzy image of the Knights' Preceptor Master appears on the screen a few seconds later.

Good evening. I hope the weather is to your liking. Anyway, you've had a month off—now we've got a job for you.

Yesterday evening a CIS monitoring station picked up a garbled distress call, broadcast over an unencrypted channel from an Asgard geological and meteorological research station a few hundred miles further north. The Asgard base is officially designated Ice Station Zulu, but the local chatter we've intercepted in the past indicates the inhabitants call it Carpenter Station. I have no idea why.

The base is located on the edge of Catena Paelex, a subsidiary crater chain of Catena Parens. It's a rich area for studying rock strata, and the Asgard team has been quietly working there for decades, probably surveying for useful minerals, but that's not our concern. Or rather it wasn't until now.

The CIS knew you were nearby, so they contacted us and asked for our help. It's not often they come to us, cap in hand, so we're going to make the most of this opportunity. You are to exploit a gap in a storm brewing in the region and investigate the situation. Officially, you're a rescue party on a mercy mission. Unofficially, the CIS wants you to download as much data as you can from the base's computers while you're there. I don't know why, and I don't ask questions. The survey Angel at your current location has been prepared for immediate takeoff.

Enemy Forces: *Asgard is likely to have a security team in place. We don't know the nature of the emergency, and they may not appreciate your presence. The CIS has issued strict orders that you are not to engage Corporate troops. If they don't want your help, you're going to have to be insistent. There's no other way of getting the data the CIS wants.*

We've no doubt Asgard also received the distress call and are likely to be sending their own rescue team. Unless their pilots are insane, the next anticipated break in the storm isn't for six hours. That should give you enough time to do your job.

Support: *You're a thousand miles from anywhere, and there's a huge storm coming. We'll be lucky to get you to the base on time as it is. You know what that means—no backup. On the plus side, the CIS has supplied us with blueprints of the station, as well as some basic information.*

Equipment: *Take whatever you need from supplies. You've got the only weapons of note already, but there are plenty of*

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toolkits, medical supplies, beaters, fuel sticks, flashlights, winter clothing, and so on.

Allow the Lance to go “shopping” for non-combat equipment as they desire. Any gear except communication equipment is available from the base’s stores. No extra ammunition or weaponry is available.

NO ONE HOME

The dropship pilot circles the Asgard base before he lands. There are no lights on, neither are there any signs of life. Attempts to reach the inhabitants by radio fail—there is only static on the line. As the ship touches down, the pilot informs the Knights the storm will hit very soon. They can either request he stays on the ground, or give him chance to fly back now while he can. Once the storm hits (20 minutes), the Angel is going nowhere fast. The only ways into the Asgard base are via either of the airlocks.

CARPENTER STATION

Carpenter Station is a geological research base belonging to the Asgard Corporation. It does not have an armory, nor does it possess any defensive systems.

IMPORTANT WM NOTES

* All doors are clearly labeled in Norwegian (Asgard’s language of choice).

* The computers accept commands in Norwegian or English, but not in Latin.

* The entire base has an ambient temperature of –18 degrees F.

* Everything is coated in a thin layer of ice (frozen condensation).

* There is no power—all doors must be hand cranked (taking 2 minutes per door). The base’s non-portable electrical equipment is non-functional, including the lights, intercom system, and computers.

* Reactivating the life support (which has an emergency generator) returns the temperature to normal (70 degrees F) at a rate of 20 degrees per half hour. Until it climbs above freezing, the rules for Cold are in effect. It’s unlikely the heroes will be here long enough for them to start suffering from the cold, but you never can tell.

* The players do not need room dimensions—they have a map.

* Most rooms have a brief read aloud description, even if it bears no part in play. To make life easier on the GM, a small paragraph entitled “Equipment” lists any suitable equipment that can be salvaged from the room.

A BLOCK: LIVING QUARTERS

The first boxed text is common to all six living quarters and is given here once. Repeat as necessary. Each room contains personal items, none of which are designed as being important to the plot. Your players may have other ideas, however.

Laid out exactly like your own quarters, the room contains a foldout bed and table, a collapsible chair, and a built-in wardrobe. A combined intercom and clock, apparently non-functioning, is built into the wall by the bed.

1. ADMINISTRATOR’S QUARTERS

The bedside alcove contains several photos of a woman and baby, none of which are labeled in any way.

2. VEHICLE OPS QUARTERS

This room was certainly lived in. Ladies’ underwear lies where it was discarded, magazines featuring cars and motorbikes lie open on the table, and a picture of a muscle-bound man wearing only the smallest pair of briefs imaginable is pinned to the ceiling above the bed.

3. SCIENTIST’S QUARTERS

Dozens of paper books stand piled on the foldout table, restricting the amount of available space. Most are on geology and rock formations. Two samples of Mars’ rock have been left on the bed.

4. SCIENTIST’S QUARTERS

This room was obviously home to someone who missed Earth. Dozens of posters of panoramic shots of Earth line the walls, and an atlas rests on the bed.

5. ENGINEER'S QUARTERS

The contents of the wardrobe have been emptied onto the bed. On top of the jumble is a box clearly labeled "Danger! Explosives!" It is empty.

6. MEDIC'S QUARTERS

Well-ordered and neat, the only personal effect noticeable is a photo of a man in the bedside alcove.

7. MESS & LOUNGE

The communal lounge contains a pool table, dartboard, and several 3D video game machines. Various magazines, some technical, some of a more personal nature, lie scattered around the table and chairs. The main dining table has been used as a barricade to block the archway to the kitchen; the chairs lie haphazardly around the room.

8. KITCHEN

Read the first text if the characters try to open the door, the second if they try to enter via the mess hall.

The manual override lever refuses to work. It may be locked from the other side.

Finally the makeshift barricade is removed. Behind it is the kitchen area, complete with a fridge, microwave, washing machine, and racks of plates and cups. Slumped against one of the cupboards is a body in a cold weather suit.

The label on the suit reveals the corpse to be Wallace Kirk (Administrator).

9. PROVISION STORE

Behind the door are crates of preserved foods in packets and cans. The water nozzle that connects to the sealed underground water tanks is closed and there is no ice beneath it.

The food is edible once heated, but the water supply is frozen. Restoring power activates the internal heaters, which require 4 hours to defrost the water enough for it to be drinkable.

10. COMMUNAL WASHROOM

Aside from the showers and toilets, there are only a few personal effects above the sinks.

11. LIBRARY/CINEMA

The library contains two tables and six chairs. Racks of data storage discs, bolding movies and electronic books, line the walls. Two smaller display and data access units sit idly in the corners.

There is a selection of reading material and movies here, none of which is important to the adventure. Removing the discs from the small display units reveals that the last books read were *Moby Dick* and *Fanbard and Lyle, the Early Years: A Swashbuckling Yarn*. The disc in the plasma screen unit is an episode from the 21st century pulp series, *The Daring Tales of Brent Hardcastle*.

12. LAUNDRY FACILITY

Two small washer-dryers stand against the back wall. A pile of laundry rests in a basket at the feet of the left hand machine; a box of soap powder tablets sits on top. On the wall above the machines hangs the laundry roster.

The washers are empty—the laundry is frozen, dirty, and is a mixture of garments from most of the crew.

13. COLD WEATHER STORAGE

Five cold weather suits hang from their books, like corpses on a gallows. The mirrored glasses reflect your lights, giving them a soulless feel.

There is obviously a suit missing. A brief examination reveals it to be that of Wallace Kirk, the administrator. Actually examining the suits reveals that all of them have been slashed, rendering them useless.

14. MAIN AIR LOCK

When the characters press the door release button read them the following.

You hit the door release button but nothing happens. Looks like you're going to have to use the manual override and hand crank the door.

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B BLOCK: COMMAND CENTER

1. MAINFRAME

The base mainframe lies quiet, the usual bank of flashing lights in darkness.

The mainframe automatically reboots once power is restored. Once it is operational, a character making an Investigation roll quickly realizes a virus has destroyed most of the stored data. However, a successful Investigation roll at -2 (takes 30 minutes per attempt) retrieves some of the base's log (give out Player Handout #2), which is recorded automatically in Norwegian and English.

Simply inserting a memory stick causes the mainframe to begin an automatic data dump. Downloading the technical data required by the CIS takes one hour.

2. COMMUNICATION SUITE

The communication suite houses all of the radio equipment for communicating with the outside world. It now lies smashed across the floor, with circuit boards trashed and wiring stripped out.

Fixing the communications suite requires a Repair roll and an hour's work. Even if fixed, the antenna is still damaged and cannot be fixed during the time allowed in this adventure.

3. ROBOT CONTROL CENTER

From here the operator could control the surveying robots. At present, all four screens are in darkness.

When power is restored, the screens spring back into life. A character making a successful Piloting roll can deduce that three of the robots are out in the field and would take six hours to get back to base. The fourth is currently sitting in the garage.

Equipment: ROV suite. The characters can use the remaining tracked robot to investigate the base, receiving visual feedback through the monitors. It has Pace 6, cannot run, and Toughness 8(2).

If they think of this, give them a brief glimpse of a shadowy form vanishing out of sight. Seeing the beast this way requires a Guts roll to avoid Fear for an hour.

4. MEDICAL CENTER

What was once the medical center, has become a morgue. Two bodies lie on the floor, each covered with a sheet. The rest of the room contains a desk, fold out examination table, and the medical cupboard, which has been ransacked, its contents lying spilled on the floor.

The corpses have all been killed in different ways. Characters examining the bodies learn their name from their overalls, but must make a Healing roll for each (takes 10 minutes per corpse) to learn the exact cause of death. Each body is described below.

Stephanie Miller (Vehicle Ops): Multiple stab wounds to the head and chest. Cause of death was a fatal wound to heart.

Dr Nicolas Hendricks (Science): Severe contusion to back of skull. Cause of death was blunt force trauma.

Dr Pierre DuPont (Medic): Several slash wounds to arms, possibly defensive. Some healing indicates they were not caused during the fatal attack. Severe desiccation and muscle atrophy of type never seen before.

5. OPERATING ROOM

The operating room contains a single operating table, as well as sterilized surgical instruments. A window provides viewing from the doctor's office.

6. MEDICAL AIRLOCK

The medical airlock provides a decontamination zone between the base and the quarantine room. When functioning, it sprays anyone in the airlock with disinfectant. A window and intercom allows communication with the quarantine room. The shutter is currently closed from the inside.

When the power is restored anyone entering the airlock is sprayed with disinfectant. It is harmless; although a character subjected to fear at this point may see his flesh start to melt away. The players may be worried that entering the quarantine suite without being disinfected may leave them open to some sort of contamination. Don't correct them.

7. QUARANTINE SUITE

Inside is a slightly large living area, with all of the standard furnishings. A shroud covered object lies on the bed.

The shroud covers the body of Dr. Cynthia Palin (physics scientist). It is strapped to the table with makeshift straps scavenged from power cable. The demon has carved vile runes into every inch of her flesh. Seeing this requires a Guts roll.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

This is the base's command center. A large desk houses a computer terminal and a data pad. Pictures of the base taken from low orbit decorate the walls.

The data pad functions (as it has an independent power supply) but contains nothing of use; just routine reports, shift patterns, and so on.

9. STORES

The storeroom contains racks of electronic supplies, spare data pads, tools, light bulbs, and other assorted bits and pieces.

Equipment: Anything the Knights need in the way of small tools or spare parts can be found here. There are no guns or explosives, however.

C BLOCK: ENGINEERING

1. LIFE SUPPORT

The machinery of the life support plant lies dormant. There are no obvious signs of damage. The control panel is currently unlit.

The life support system can be switched on without the power being restored, as it has its own backup generator. Any character inspecting the control panel realizes that the system has been switched off. Flicking the switch starts the machinery back to life.

As mentioned earlier, air returns to breathable levels quickly, but reheating the base takes much longer.

2. GARAGE

The garage houses all three rovers and one of the ROVs, all parked neatly. The inner wall adjoining the powerplant room is severely buckled and breeched in several places.

Any character inspecting the interior of any of the rovers immediately sees that the control panel has been badly smashed. All of them are

suffering similar damage. Repairs require a successful Repair roll at -2, tools, and 3 hours of time per roll.

The ROV is operational but cannot be controlled without power, as the ROV Suite does not function.

Activating the life support without first repairing the breach causes the air to bleed out to atmosphere through the powerplant ceiling. Of course, without power the alarm klaxons do not work. A character in the room when life support is restored cannot help but feel the drag as the air vents out. Repairing the wall requires a Repair roll, a welding torch, and an hour of time.

3. COLD WEATHER STORAGE

Six cold weather suits hang from their hooks, like corpses on a gallows. The mirrored glasses reflect your lights, giving them a soulless feel.

As before, all the suits have been slashed, rendering them useless.

4. FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT STORE

This small room contains a variety of color-coded, handheld fire extinguishers.

Equipment: There are a dozen water, CO₂, foam, and halon extinguishers. All are handheld and explode for 3d6 damage in a Small Burst Template if punctured.

5. HYDROPONIC GARDEN

The hydroponic chamber was designed to provide the crew with a way of cleaning their air, as well as providing limited fresh food. All of the plants are coated in frost and appear to have died, their leaves withered and brown.

Characters exploring the northern, domed area automatically find a body amongst the dead plants. Its id tag shows it to be Patrick Swartz (Mining Engineer). An empty bottle and syringe lie nearby.

A character passing a Healing (-2) or Knowledge (Chemistry) roll identifies the bottle as containing a powerful sedative. Large doses can be fatal (Schwartz injected the entire bottle). A successful Knowledge (Biology) roll or a Common Knowledge roll at -2 confirms all the plants are dead.

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Reactivating the power restores light and heat, as well as bringing the bio-readout screen to operational status. It confirms that the plants are dead.

6. HATCHES TO MAINTENANCE DUCTS

A large metal hatch in the floor allows access to the underground maintenance ducts. The hatch is currently closed.

The hatches are manual operation only, and are similar to those on submarines (when you turn a central round handle to lock and unlock).

There is no map of the underground ducts—assume that there are a dozen of so tunnels going under C Block. If you want to be nasty, have the demon attack when a character is down here. If you cannot get a player to volunteer to go exploring, explain that the powerplant repairs require it.

7. TOOL STORAGE

The tool store is an Aladdin's cave of spare parts and tools. Everything needed to keep the generators up and running is stored here.

Equipment: This is a McGyver's palace. Cutting and welding torches, heavy tools, 20 pounds of mining explosives (1d6 damage per pound, Medium Burst Template), fuses, spare parts for the powerplants, and so on can be found here.

8. WORKSHOP

The central corridor of C Block doubles as the workshop. Various small pieces of equipment are in various states of repair.

Equipment: Various hand-held tools, such as hammers and screwdrivers, as well as a broken data pad, an ROV camera, and other useless gear.

9. POWERPLANT

The powerplant room is a complete disaster area; the ceiling and outer walls are ruptured and a large part of the powerplant has been destroyed.

Several skill checks can be made in this room.

* A Repair roll confirms that the powerplant itself did not explode, it was blown up. However, the explosion looks far worse than it actually is.

* A Knowledge (Demolitions) roll confirms that at least five pounds of mining explosives was used.

* A Notice roll reveals that an unexploded charge has been placed on the northern part of the powerplant. It contains eight pounds of explosives, more than enough to cause severe damage. Disabling it requires a Knowledge (Demolition) roll. A roll of a natural 1, regardless of Wild Die, sets off the charge, causing 8d6 damage to everything in the room and wrecking the powerplant beyond repair.

* Repairing the powerplant requires a Repair roll, access to the tool store, and two hours of time. This is a jury-rigged repair and the characters know it will only last a day or two at most. Complete repairs are beyond the scope of this adventure.

D BLOCK: SCIENCE CENTER

The WM should note that rooms 2 through 4 on the map do not actually exist as separate entities. Although Asgard filed plans detailing them, in reality they are a single room, constructed to house the FC Drive.

1. SCIENTIFIC STORE

The scientific store is crammed with boxes of instruments, ranging from spare circuit boards to microscopes. Everything appears undamaged at a glance.

Equipment: Pretty much any piece of scientific apparatus the characters may wish for.

2. GEOLOGY LAB

The main lab contains the stores of rock dug up from beneath the surface. Most of it rests in labeled jars, but powdered remnants of several rock samples lie scattered on one of the workbenches. One sample catches your attention, as it appears to be in better condition. Although split in half, it appears to once have formed a faceted sphere.

The labeled rock samples are just that. The powdered fragments are the eggs smashed by the crew; the broken rock is the egg from which the larva hatched.

Analyzing the powder or cracked egg requires a successful (Geology) roll and an hour of time. On a success, the character learns that the rock is like nothing he has ever seen before and defies chemical analysis..

3-5. FC DRIVE TEST LAB

The sides of the room are a mass of computer banks and workbenches. In the center is a table, on which sits an unusual piece of machinery. The device is inactive.

A hero making a Common Knowledge roll at -4 recognizes the device as a primitive FC Drive (he read about them in a book). Such devices are believed lost to mankind. The drive contains its own power supply, and can thus be activated independently of the main power supply. However, it weighs several tons and thus cannot be easily transported.

6. "EXPERIMENTATION CHAMBER"

Through the reinforced glass you can see that the experimentation chamber is intact and empty.

The chamber was used as a clean room, allowing the scientists to work in an area totally free of contaminants.

THE DEMON'S TACTICS

The demon is not a combatant. It operates from the shadows, using its ability to detect life to locate suitable prey. Avoid the temptation to get the fiend involved in a standup fight. Instead, use it to induce fear and paranoia in the group (see below). No set attacks are listed for the demon—the GM should bring the creature in play whenever he thinks it is needed to keep the paranoia going. The demon thrives on fear, though it may have met its match in Knights of the Sacri Ordines.

Keep the demon in play as long as possible. While it can recharge Power Points quickly, it does not have an infinite supply of them. It should not be slain before the Asgard team arrives (see page 191). Only when it is out of Power Points *and* the Knights and Asgard have turned to blows should it finally reveal itself.

A selection of possible uses for its abilities is given below. Feel free to create your own as required and to suit your group's style of play.

Entangle: This should be used whenever the creature needs to escape from a small number of attackers.

Illusions: This is the demon's most versatile ability. With it, the demon can convince a character that he is a survivor, or lure a Knight away from the others by generating noises (such as tapping or cries for help).

Invisibility: Although being invisible is great in combat, the demon isn't much of a fighter. Instead, it uses this power to get close to its foes. This allows it to open and close doors or move objects around, thus startling its prey.

Panic: Reducing a foe's ability to resist fear is a very powerful tool. Typically, the demon should invoke this power first, and then hit the victim with fear.

Puppet: This ability can be used to make a character wander off on his own, to attack his colleagues, or simply to move away from an area. With the added feature of foes not being able to remember any actions undertaken while dominated, *puppet* is perhaps the creature's most potent ability.

Zombie: Half a dozen unarmed corpses aren't much threat to the Knights, but it's all part of the fear-inducing game the demon is playing. Ideally, the corpses should only animate when a hero is alone with one.

ISOLATION & PARANOIA

The nature of the creature in this adventure should be used to create an air of isolation and paranoia. Hopefully the GM has seen *The Thing*, *Event Horizon*, or the first *Alien* film—use them for inspiration!

The characters are responding to a possible emergency situation and should act accordingly. Stress that multiple tasks (restoring power, finding the crew, checking the logs, etc.) need to be completed as fast as possible, if they are to save the Asgard scientists. They also have to steal important data, which means taking the time to repair the powerplant first.

Use the demon's abilities as well to isolate characters. Take players away from the table while you talk to them or they perform actions detrimental to the rest of the group whilst under a *puppet* spell.

Possible actions include:

- * Smashing the Angel's controls to prevent escape. If the Knights leave the dropship pilot, the demon controls the pilot to do this. He then orders him to commit suicide in front of the Knights (this should succeed—there's no need to have an NPC running around).

- * Locking someone in a room and then running away.

- * Planting some of the spare explosives and setting a timer.

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With no witnesses and no one admitting to performing the acts, the paranoia levels should start to increase.

Chip away at their sanity through repeated uses of *illusion* by creating illusions affecting all their senses. If you're stuck for ideas on how to screw them up use these examples:

- * Hearing one of the corpses speak.
- * Catching a glimpse of someone moving around (in the hope of separating the party).

* Believing they are talking to one of the dead crew (before they find the body).

* Impersonate the Senior Knight (only possible after he has seen or heard him) and give another Knight orders, either "in person" or over the communicator. Typically these commands should be ones which lead to the victim being isolated from their comrades.



ASGARD ARRIVES

In the briefing it was stated that an Asgard team would only arrive at the base while the Knights were present if the pilot was insane. While not clinically insane, he is a loyal Corporate employee, and that means obeying orders. *Exactly* two and a half hours after the Knights arrive (not enough for the party to reboot the powerplant and download the data) an Asgard Nightwing touches down outside the base. The demon should still be alive at this point.

The team (including the pilot) belongs to Asgard's elite 1st Brigade, known within the Corporation as "Odin's Ravens." They're here to neutralize any threats, recover the FC Drive and the technical data, and take care of their wounded—in that order.

If the Knights have restored power and fixed the communications suite, the Asgard troops announce their presence by contacting the base. This is the Knights' first chance to establish some sort of dialogue. Not doing so should cause problems when the two teams eventually meet face to face (it's "obvious" to the Asgard team that the Knights are here for illegal reasons if they wouldn't respond to the hail). Asgard's forces don't immediately attack the Knights on sight—they give them a single chance to surrender first!

Exactly how the encounter between Asgard and the Lance plays out is down to the Knights. The Lance may be able to convince Asgard they're here on a mercy mission. Of course, the presence of Corporate troops makes stealing the data extremely difficult, but that's part of the dilemma now facing the Knights.

Asgard, regardless of whether the Knight answered any comms signal or not, is paranoid about the FC Drive being discovered. Olafsson's first priority is to secure the FC drive.

He sends his soldiers to secure the laboratory, while he, the medic, and the scientist make for the mainframe. Whether power is restored or not, Olafsson intends to remove the hard drives so they can be returned for study. This will take 15 minutes. Unless he is prevented from doing this, the Knights have lost the data. If push comes to shove, he has orders to destroy the FC Drive, but only when the technical readouts are secured—Asgard has no wish to let it fall into Church hands.

By dividing his forces, Olafsson has unwittingly given the demon more playthings! For its part, the demon quickly uses *puppet* on a Corporate soldier. It learns why they are at the base, and puts two and two together regard-

ing its appearance on Salus and the FC Drive. It then attempts to track down and possess the scientist, Polikov, who has the know-how to switch the device on again. It also tries to stir up trouble between the Union and Church forces, hoping to get the two sides to attack each other.

If the Knights have no idea what the FC Drive is (and there's a good chance of that), Olafsson tries a bluff, telling them it's an experimental grav engine. Should it become clear the Knights know about the drive's true nature, Lt-Major Olafsson has a tough call to make. While he could try to eliminate the Knights before they can report the device's existence, failure would not only leave the FC Drive in Church hands but would also give the Church political ammunition—the Knights' headset cameras would record his attack. If he can find a way to make the Knights look like the aggressors, he'll take his chances and order them killed. Otherwise, he'll have no choice but to give the order once the drive is secured or destroyed and the data in his hands.

Lieutenant-Major Lars Olafsson: See page 192.

Nadia Polikov: See page 192.

Medic (1): See page 192.

Veteran Soldiers (4): See page 192.

AFTERMATH

If the Knights are slain, Asgard successfully keeps its research hushed up. Should they manage to recover the technical data, the Church orders the Knights to keep quiet about the discovery. The data is taken away and studied carefully by top scientists. Neither side makes any mention of the demon.

An Asgard attack on Knights "conducting a rescue mission" provides the Church with prime political ammunition. Asgard is admonished by the Union, who knows nothing about its FC Drive project, and greatly loses face. Its protests of accidental friendly-fire and attempts to brand the Church as the aggressor fall on deaf ears. Even if the Knights fired first, that's not how their headset camera footage shows events unfolding—thanks to some creative editing.

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THE CAST

All the stats used in the adventures are grouped here for convenience. Stat blocks are listed alphabetically, first by Church forces or allies, and then by Rephaim or other adversaries.

ASGARD RESCUE TEAM

The Asgard rescue team is primarily concerned with recovering the FC Drive and the technical data stored in the mainframe. Recovery of the scientists is a secondary mission goal.



LIEUTENANT MAJOR LARS OLAFSSON

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11(6)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor, Hold the Line, Level Headed

Gear: Medium armor (+6), 12mm SMG with 2 magazines (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8, Auto, 3RB), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2), headset comms, binoculars, medpac, ID tag



NADIA POLIKOV, SCIENTIST

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d8, Investigation d6, Knowledge (FC Drives) d8, Notice d6, Repair d8, Shooting d4

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 9(4)

Edges & Hindrances: —

Gear: Light armor (+4), 12mm pistol with 2 magazines (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8, Semi-auto), headset comms, portable computer

MEDIC

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d7, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Healing d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9(4)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Healer, Medic

Gear: Light armor (+4), 12mm pistol with 2

magazines (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8, Semi-auto) molecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP 2), headset comms, ID tag

CORPORATE SOLDIER, VETERAN

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Notice d8, Shooting d8

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12(6)

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Improved Dodge, Nerves of Steel, Rock and Roll

Gear: Medium armor (+6), 12mm ACR with 5 magazines (Range: 30/60/120, Damage: 2d8+1, Auto, 3RB), 5 grenades (Range: 20/40/80, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, MBT), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP2), headset comms, medpac, ID tag

DARK KNIGHT

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Rock and Roll

Gear: Light armor breastplate (+4), 12mm SMG with AP rounds (Range: 15/30/60, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 6)

Special Abilities:

* **Insane:** These insane soldiers are immune to Fear and Intimidation.



DARK KNIGHT OFFICER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d8, Riding d8, Shooting d8

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command

Gear: Light armor breastplate (+4), 12mm pistol with AP rounds (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8, ROF 3, AP 6)

Special Abilities:

* **Insane:** These insane soldiers are immune to Fear and Intimidation.



DOCTOR ABEL MILLER

Abel Miller is an experienced surgeon of some renown. His expertise did not go unnoticed by a Rephaim agent, who, over a period of many months, corrupted the surgeon into the Necrolatry heresy. Miller takes prostitutes and down and outs, cuts out their hearts, and gives them to his masters for use in necromantic weaponry. On the surface, he's polite and sociable, but beneath the surface lurks the deranged mind of a psychotic serial killer.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Healing d10, Notice d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Delusional (Minor: Necrolatry heresy), Overconfident

Edges: Berserk, Improved Frenzy

Gear: Laser scalpel (Str+d6, AP 4)

a Touch Attack. Every raise on its Fighting roll automatically inflicts one wound to its target.

- * **Fear:** Anyone seeing the creature must make a Guts roll.
- * **Greater Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage. Immune to poison and disease. Piercing weapons do half damage. Ignores wound penalties.
- * **Sire:** A victim Incapacitated by the zombie lord's Death Touch has a 50% chance of dying and returning to life as a regular zombie within 1d4 rounds.
- * **Stench of Death:** Zombie lords reek of death. The first time a character gets within 3" of a zombie lord, he must make a Vigor roll or be Shaken for 1d6 rounds. Whether he succeeds or fails, he is then immune to the stench for 24 hours.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Halves penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets.



HIGH EXARCH MALIFIX OF FANE OBSCURUS

Like many lower-caste Rephaim, Malifix's title is self-given, rather than earned. The mastermind behind the plot to create an army of zombie's in the heart of a human city, the zombie lord didn't seek approval from his master. While it is very likely the liche would have approved the plan, it would also have taken full credit at the Dark Conclave. Perhaps because of his Fane, Malifix isn't like regular zombie lords. While his compatriots serve as "recruiters," Malifix is very much a hands-on leader, though one with only limited combat experience.

Malifix's Necromancy ability, common to all zombie lords, has been used on the passengers. His Power Points have yet to regenerate, and thus he is incapable of using the power during the adventure.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11 (3)

Edges: Command, Frenzy, Level Headed

Gear: Stygian armor (+3), runic long sword (Str+d8+4, AP 4)

Special Abilities:

- * **Death Touch:** The touch of a zombie lord can drain the life of its victims. Instead of a normal attack, a zombie lord may make



PRIMUS PILUS CALVORIX OF FANE DOCTRINA FATUM

Calvorix is a young vampire, barely into his third decade since his conversion. Before his rebirth, he was an Impaler combat medic. His title, which translates as "first spear," is a direct reference to the Roman rank. His master, who has studied Earth records, uses Roman titles for his troops. Calvorix's title is both his actual rank, him being third in command of one of the liche's legions, and a reference to his previous life.

As well as being a capable combatant, Calvorix is a very capable weird scientist, having taken to the system extremely quickly. Where once he saved lives, he now uses human body parts to further his master's goals. His stygian armor is decorated with befoiled Impaler symbols as a mockery, and memory, of his life before undeath.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8+2, Healing d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Persuasion d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6, Weird Science d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 11(2)

Special Training: Face-to-Face, Total Faith (included)

Hindrances: Cautious, Vengeful (Major)

Edges: Block, Level Headed, Spear Mastery,

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Sweep

Gear: Stygian armor (+2), Hades pistol (range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2–3d6, PP 15), rune spear (Str+d6+2, AP 2, Parry 1, Reach 1, 1-handed), adrenal bracelet, vocal cords

Special Abilities:

- * **Bite:** Str+d6.
- * **Frenzy:** Vampires may make two attacks per round at –2 penalty.
- * **Greater Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots. Half-damage from piercing weapons. Ignores wound penalties.
- * **Leadership:** Vampires have the Command, Fervor, and Hold the Line Edges.
- * **Sire:** Anyone incapacitated but not killed by a vampire must make a Spirit roll or die and return from the dead as a Vampire after 1d4 days.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.



THE DEMON

The demon ranks in the Ordo Secundus. Its specialty is fear. Unlike many others, it has no name, at it never reveals one. Fear of the unknown is much more potent, and once a thing has a name, you can begin to rationalize it.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d12, Psionics d10, Stealth d12

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 8

Hindrances: —

Special Abilities:

- * **Demon:** +2 Toughness, +2 to recover from being Shaken, Called Shots do no extra damage; immune to poison and disease, no wound penalties.
- * **Fear Regeneration:** If a victim fails a Guts roll or is subjected to *fear* within 12" of the demon, it can make a Vigor roll to recover one wound. Wound penalties apply as normal.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Immunity (Cold):** Immune to background cold and any attack involving cold (such as liquid nitrogen).
- * **Improved Rapid Recharge:** Recovers 1 Power Point every 15 minutes.

- * **Indistinct Form:** The demon's form is shadowy and continually shifts. This gives it the equivalent of the Improved Block and Improved Dodge Edges.

- * **Mentalist:** +2 to opposed Psionics rolls.

- * **Powers:** The demon can use the following powers: *entangle* (paralysis), *fear* (illusions), *illusion* (see below), *invisibility* (a favorite for its tactics), *panic* (makes victim's nervous and easily startled), *puppet* (mental domination), *zombie* (places tiny portion of self inside corpse). Each requires use of the Psionics skill. It has 40 Power Points. Victims of *puppet* have no memory of being dominated, nor of acts committed under the demon's command. Note that the demon does *not* have to be able to see its victims—it simply has to know where they are and be in range to use its powers on them.

- * **Sense Life:** The demon can detect life within 24". This functions through solid objects.

- * **Slam:** Str+d6.

ILLUSION

Power Points: 2

Range: Smarts x 2

Duration: 3 (1/round)

Puppet can be used to represent illusions. However, *puppet* forces a victim to act as the caster wishes. *Illusion* simply creates a false image, typically an object up to Size +4, allowing the "victims" to interact with it how they please, it can also reproduce any sound the demon has heard before. Through this power, it can create images of the Knights, once it has seen them, and even speak to them through their headset communicators.

This power is quite versatile, and exists only for this monster—don't consider it a standard power suitable for the setting.



THE LAWYER

Miller's "lawyer" is actually his handler. The surgeon was given instructions to call his "lawyer" should he ever run into difficulties with the Knights or Lictor Sergeants. Although Miller believes his lawyer is there to protect him, he's actually there to silence him if his illegal operations are discovered.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Charisma: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Mean

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Improved Level Headed, Marksman, Quick Draw,

Gear: 12mm pistol with AP rounds (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d8, AP 6, Semi-Auto), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2)

ZOMBIE

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d4

Pace: 4 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Flechette SMG with 2 magazines (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 2, Auto), one monofilament grenade (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, MBT)

Special Abilities:

- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots. Half-damage from piercing weapons.

ZOMBIE, ELITE

Zombies aren't quick learners, but after a decade or so, the lucky ones begin to develop some improvements and a strange survival instinct. These particularly zombie understand the need to use cover.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Pace: 4 **Parry:** 6 **Toughness:** 7/13(6)

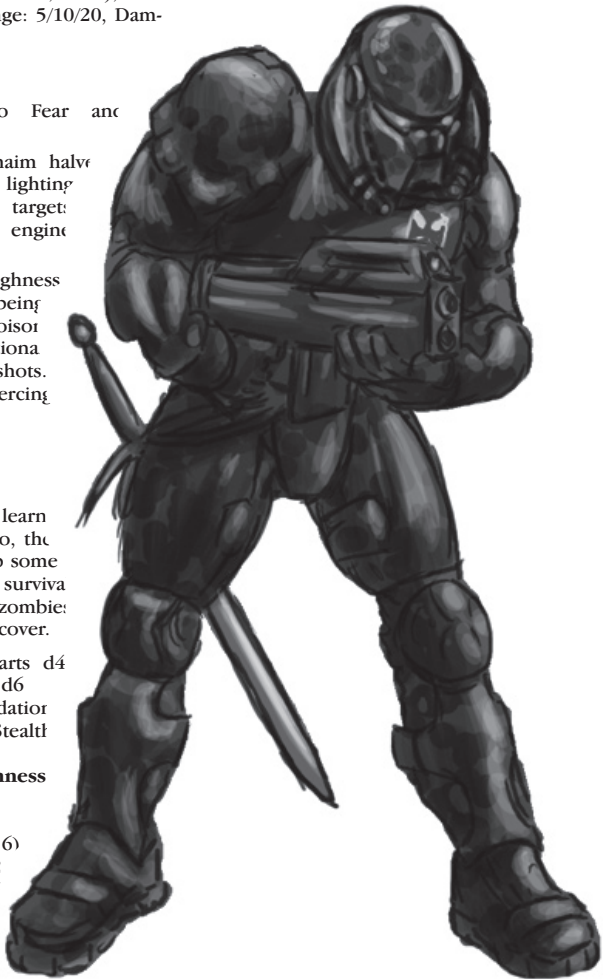
Edges: Rock and Roll

Gear: Medium armor (+6), molecular sword (Str+d8+2 AP 4), flechette SMG with 2 magazines (Range: 12/24/48 Damage: 2d6+1, AP 2, Auto), one monofilament grenade

(Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, MBT)

Special Abilities:

- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots. Half-damage from piercing weapons.



HANDOUT #1: ASGARD CORPORATION SURVEY STATION “ZULU”

Location: Catena Paelex, Terra Septentriones

Purpose: Mineral Survey & Meteorological Study

Total Working Staff: Six [plus unknown number of security staff]

Vehicles: One Mjolnir MDP-17 mobile drilling platform, two Loki MR-29-B rovers, four remote robotic SP-X1-7 surveyor probes

Computer Terminals: Computer terminals are marked with dots on the map.

A-BLOCK: LIVING QUARTERS (1 STORY)

1	Administrator's quarters	2	Vehicle Operator's quarters
3	Scientist's quarters	4	Scientist's quarters
5	Engineer's quarters	6	Medic's quarters
7	Mess & lounge	8	Kitchen
9	Food/water store	10	Communal toilet/shower facilities
11	Library/cinema	12	Laundry facilities
13	Cold weather clothing storage	14	Main airlock

B-BLOCK: COMMAND CENTER (1 STORY)

1	Mainframe & master console	2	Communications suite
3	Robot control center	4	Medical center
5	Operating room	6	Medical Airlock
7	Quarantine suite	8	Administrator's office
9	Stores		

C-BLOCK: ENGINEERING (1 STORY, PLUS ONE SUB-LEVEL FOR ENGINEERING ACCESS)

1	Life support systems	2	Vehicle & robot parking bay
3	Cold weather clothing storage	4	Fire-fighting equipment storage
5	Hydroponic station	6	Access to maintenance ducts
7	Tool storage	8	Workshop area
9	Main powerplant		

D-BLOCK: SCIENCE CENTER (1 STORY)

1	Scientific equipment storage	2	Geology laboratory
3	Metallurgy laboratory	4	Meteorology station
5	General research laboratory	6	Experimentation isolation chamber

HANDOUT #2: MAIN STATION LOG

D-2 (1232H)	The electrical storm has damaged the main communication antenna. Miller says that it can be repaired but we'll be off line for a few days. I've sent a brief message via the backup system to let the Board know.
D-2 (1741H)	Palin has double-checked everything, and we're good to go. Without being able to communicate back home I have no choice but to follow our last orders and commence with the test as planned.
D-2 (1800H)	Success! Everything ran according to plan. Well, almost. The drive created a low-level space-time distortion. The computer recorded a field surge, but Palin rushed in to correct it. Brave, but foolish—no one knows what the field could do to living flesh. Anyway, we've done it! We're on our way back to the stars! Have recorded all data ready for transmission once the main array is back on line.
D-2 (2310H)	Palin has gone insane and murdered Miller! God knows what happened. Doc says that Miller was stabbed to death with a screwdriver. We caught Palin leaving the garage and subdued her. Placed her in quarantine. Doc is checking for drugs. The bitch has smashed up all the rovers. Without Miller repairs will take a while.
D-1 (0825H)	Investigation started into Palin's behavior. Doc says no drugs in her system. She was in the room when the FC Drive started, but Doc says the field was stable and shouldn't have affected her. Repairs started on rovers.
D-1 (0945H)	Doc called me to quarantine—Palin is awake. Claims to have no memory of what happened. Lying bitch! Christ, IntSec are going to tear her a new asshole for this.
D-1 (1130H)	Computer glitch reported by Schwartz. Can't find Hendricks. First the antenna and now the mainframe. Bloody cheap systems.
D-1 (1137H)	Hendricks has attacked Doc! What the hell is going on here? Schwartz gave Hendricks a clubbing with a fire extinguisher and killed her. Doc says her own injuries are minor and is running a viral check on everyone.
D-1 (1340H)	Doc activated fire alarm in Med Lab. Something attacked her. Couldn't get much sense from her. What did this? My medical knowledge is limited, but I don't think Doc is going to survive. I dare not release Palin from quarantine. Will fire off another mayday using the backup array. I doubt it has the power to reach anybody in the storm.
D-1 (1410H)	Communication with other bases overdue. How long before I can expect a rescue? Can't find Schwartz. Will check on Palin later.
D-1 (1425H)	Fire alarm activated in Comm Suite. Shit, shit, shit! Someone has smashed the radio—it must be Schwartz. Is he mad?
D-1 (1630H)	Oh God! The powerplant has been damaged! Thank God life support is working. The fire burnt out quickly. No chance of repairing the powerplant without Miller or Schwartz. Palin is dead. Something horrible did this. Will start checking the base for Schwartz.
D-1 (2000H)	I'm going to turn off life support and freeze the bastard to death. Suit will keep me warm for a while. Must find Schwartz before it gets him too.
D-1 (2157H)	Found Schwartz in hydroponics. He took an overdose. I don't know if that was cowardice or bravery. I keep hearing noises. It sounds like Hendricks talking but it can't be. Am going to barricade myself in the kitchen and wait for rescue. With any luck it'll only be a fe [end of log]

B



C

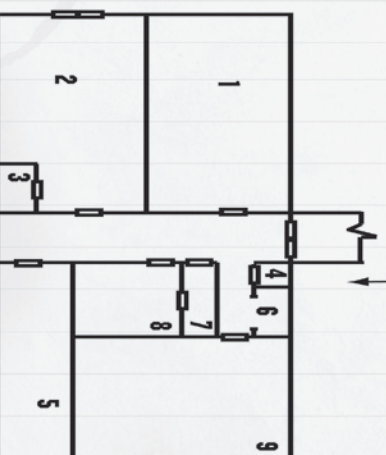


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