

DARK HERESY™ PURGE THE UNCLEAN™



ADVENTURES OF INTRIGUE,
ACTION & HORROR

WARHAMMER™
40,000
ROLEPLAY

DARK HERESY

PURGE THE UNCLEAN



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM
DARKNESS OF THE 4TH MILLENNIUM

CREDITS

WRITTEN BY
T. S. Luikart

DEVELOPMENT
Owen Barnes

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Alan Bligh, Kate Flack,
John French, Paul King
and Dylan Owen

COVER ART
Clint Langley

CARTOGRAPHY
Andrew Law

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Mark Raynor

INTERIOR ART & GRAPHICS
John Blanche, Steve Boulter,
Alex Boyd, Robin Carey, Paul Dainton,
Wayne England, David Gallagher,
Jes Goodwin, Nuala Kinrade,
Karl Kopinski, Stefan Kopinski,
Clint Langley, Pat Loboiko,
Adrian Smith, Andrea Uderzo
and John Wigley

PROJECT MANAGEMENT/ART DIRECTION
Zoë Wedderburn

GAMES WORKSHOP

LICENSING MANAGER
Owen Rees

LICENSING & ACQUIRED RIGHTS MANAGER
Erik Mogensen

HEAD OF LEGAL & LICENSING
Andy Jones

FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES

MANAGING DEVELOPER
Michael Hurley

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPER
Jeff Tidball

ADDITIONAL GRAPHIC DESIGN
Kevin Childress

PUBLISHER
Christian T. Petersen



**FANTASY
FLIGHT
GAMES**

Fantasy Flight Games
1975 West County Road B2
Roseville, MN 55113
USA

Copyright © Games Workshop Limited 2008. Games Workshop, Warhammer 40,000, Warhammer 40,000 Role Play, Dark Heresy, the foregoing marks' respective logos, Rogue Trader, Dark Heresy and all associated marks, logos, places, names, creatures, races and race insignia/devices/logos/symbols, vehicles, locations, weapons, units and unit insignia, characters, products and illustrations from the Warhammer 40,000 universe and the Dark Heresy game setting are either ®, TM and/or © Games Workshop Ltd 2000-2008, variably registered in the UK and other countries around the world. This edition published under license to Fantasy Flight Publishing Inc. Fantasy Flight Games and the FFG logo are trademarks of Fantasy Flight Publishing, Inc. All Rights Reserved to their respective owners.

ISBN 978-1-58994-456-5

Product Code DH03

Printed in China

For details of the whole Dark Heresy range, an ever-growing selection of free downloads, answers to rule queries, or just to pass on greetings, visit us online at

www.FantasyFlightGames.com

INTRODUCTION

Rejoice For You Are True	4
Shades on Twilight	4
Baron Hopes	4

CHAPTER I – REJOICE FOR YOU ARE TRUE

Faith is a Potent Narcotic	7
Uncovering the Truth of the True	8
Ordo Involvement	8
The Matter of the Meter	9
<i>Inquisitor Globus Vaarak</i>	9
Timeline	10
In the House of Strophes	12
<i>The Strophes</i>	13
Intrigue and the Telepath	14
Pomp Under the Circumstances	15
Hive Sibellus Law	15
But We Didn't Know That	17
At the Barking Saint	18
An Atmosphere for Intrigue	18
The Barking Saint (Map)	20
<i>Vorlin Orday</i>	21
Lady Borell's Soiree	22
Imminent Death and the Intrigue Genre	22
<i>Siprit Daneen</i>	8
Orday's Departure	25
Farcosia	25
<i>Theodosia</i>	27
The Hustle (Map)	29
What Has Been Discerned So Far?	30
The Alabaster Court	31
Slaanesh Cultists Surely	31
The Alabaster Court (Map)	32
<i>Elseрге Krin</i>	35
Conversations with the Choir	36
<i>Caros Shoal</i>	36
Strike Against Strophes	38
House Strophes (Map)	39
To Ambulon	41
The Blatant Way	41
Every Vision has its Price	43
The Oracle Ocular	43
Joyous Choir's Temple (Map)	44
Serrated Query's Operatives	45
Impossible Processing	46
Experience Awards	46
NPCs	48
Player Handout 1.1: Joyous Choir Pamphlet	50

CHAPTER II – SHADES ON TWILIGHT

A Legendary Blade	53
Ordo Involvement	54
The Heart of the Hulk	55
Timeline	56
<i>Brother-Sergeant Agamorr</i>	58
Preparations	59
Questions and Answers with the Astartes	59
The Twilight (Map)	61
A Warped Derelict	62
First Contact	64
Warp Beasts	64
The Storage Chamber (Map)	65
Bring It On!	66

Splinters in the Dark	67
<i>Ketserar</i>	68
Soldevan's Team	72
<i>Enginseer Molochan</i>	72
<i>Calculus-Logi Tremean</i>	72
<i>Sergeant Forden</i>	73
<i>Lady D</i>	73
Wards	74
That Which Remains	75
The Girl	75
The Imperial Creed and Spirits of the Immaterium	76
Crovus	77
Ishtan Vogel	78
Vox Code	79
The Luminous Reproach	80
The Liber Daemonica	80
In the Dark	82
The Strike Force of the Kabal of Crimson Woes	82
The Black Ship (Map)	83
We'll Be Back Mon-Keigh!	84
Acolytes We Are Leaving!	85
Experience Awards	85
NPCs	86
Corsair Weapons	89
Player Handout 2.1: Twilight Hulk Map	90

CHAPTER III – BARON HOPES

Links in a Chain	93
The Slow Creep of Fear	93
Ordo Involvement	94
The Late Baron	95
Timeline	95
<i>Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis</i>	99
<i>Captain Kobal Aizdar</i>	100
<i>Proctor Noles Rotlan</i>	103
Arbites Op-Centre (Map)	104
The Harrow	105
Facts & Speculation	106
<i>Captain Movern</i>	106
A Priest's Lot	109
Mutant Thugs	114
<i>Olion, Mutant Negotiator</i>	116
Talking to Mutants	117
Wrong Place, Right Time	119
The Personal Touch	119
Hazael's Cross (Map)	120
A Blueprint for Madness	121
The Broken Chains	122
<i>Throgel</i>	122
<i>Assod Morirr, Mutant Cultist</i>	122
<i>Raze</i>	123
<i>Mutant Terrorists</i>	123
Saint Ulbrexis	124
Warp Zombies	124
Running the Battle	126
Aftermath	128
Experience Awards	128
NPCs	129
Player Handout 3.1: The Sepheris Secundus Transcript	130
APPENDIX – THE SERRATED QUERY	134
APPENDIX – THE FACELESS ONE	136

INTRODUCTION

"So far from the light of the Throne, it is easy to get lost in the darkness."

— Inquisitor Vownus Kaede.

Purge the Unclean is an adventure anthology for *Warhammer 40,000 Roleplay: DARK HERESY* consisting of three linked but very different journeys into the shadows of the Imperium within the Calixis Sector. The adventures follow several of the plot threads left open at the conclusion of *Illumination*—the introductory adventure in *DARK HERESY*—and are suitable for Acolytes under Rank 5. However, the adventures have also been designed with an eye towards the fact that not every GM will wish to run their campaign within the 40KRP's core Calixis Sector setting. While these adventures all showcase some of the darker aspects of the Golgenna Reach, they can easily be moved to other portions of the vast Imperium with little effort on the part of the GM.

Each of the adventures within this book stands alone, yet they are also linked; a GM may use them as a springboard for an entire campaign. Each of the adventures also has an "Ordos" sidebar for GMs that wish to explore more of the interplay and rivalries of the various Ordos of the Inquisition. One of the terrible but unseen villains of the Calixis Sector is whispered of within the pages of this august tome. What place he (or is that a she, or an it?) plays in each GM's campaign, if any, is up to them.

While all three adventures within this anthology involve investigations of some sort, they are each thematically geared towards a different mode of gaming: action, horror and intrigue. Sidebars throughout provide useful advice for GMs (new and experienced), on how to run the various styles in an effective manner.

The three adventures are:

REJOICE FOR YOU ARE TRUE

A seemingly harmless Imperial cult hides dark secrets behind a friendly exterior. The Acolytes will have to go undercover on the Calixis Sector's capital world of Scintilla, to understand what the Joyous Choir has to do with kidnappings and corrupt xenos technology. The answers are not for the faint of heart.

SHADES ON TWILIGHT

Of all the mysteries of the galaxy, none conjure up such powerful images as that of the space hulks, the cast-off debris treasure troves of the warp. When a space hulk broadcasting the call sign of a long lost Inquisitor enters the Golgenna Reach, the "expendable" Acolytes are sent aboard to see what they can discover before the Imperial Navy destroys the ship—perhaps with them upon it!

BARON HOPES

A brutal group of mutant terrorists answering to a name that has been thought buried for a decade has returned to bring destruction and terror to the mines of Sepheris Secundus, the mineral powerhouse of the Calixis Sector. The Acolytes are accompanied by a mysterious "expert" in order to search out and crush the criminals, once and for all. The past, however, never seems to rest lightly.





REJOICE FOR YOU ARE TRUE

FAITH IS A POTENT NARCOTIC

•
UNCOVERING THE
TRUTH OF THE TRUE

•
THE MATTER
OF THE METER

•
IN THE HOUSE OF STROPHES

•
POMP UNDER THE
CIRCUMSTANCES

•
AT THE BARKING SAINT

•
LADY BORELL'S SOIREE

•
ORDAY'S DEPARTURE

•
WHAT HAS BEEN
DISCERNED SO FAR?

•
THE ALABASTER COURT

•
CONVERSATIONS WITH
THE CHOIR

•
STRIKE AGAINST STROPHES

•
TO AMBULON

•
EVERY VISION HAS ITS PRICE

•
IMPOSSIBLE PROCESSING

•
NPCs



CHAPTER I: REJOICE FOR YOU ARE TRUE

"There shall be no mercy for those too weak to adhere to the correct course. For mercy shall destroy us if it erodes our strength and weakens our resolve. Find courage in your hatred of the xenos, the impure and witch. To do otherwise is to shame the very foundations of the institution you represent."

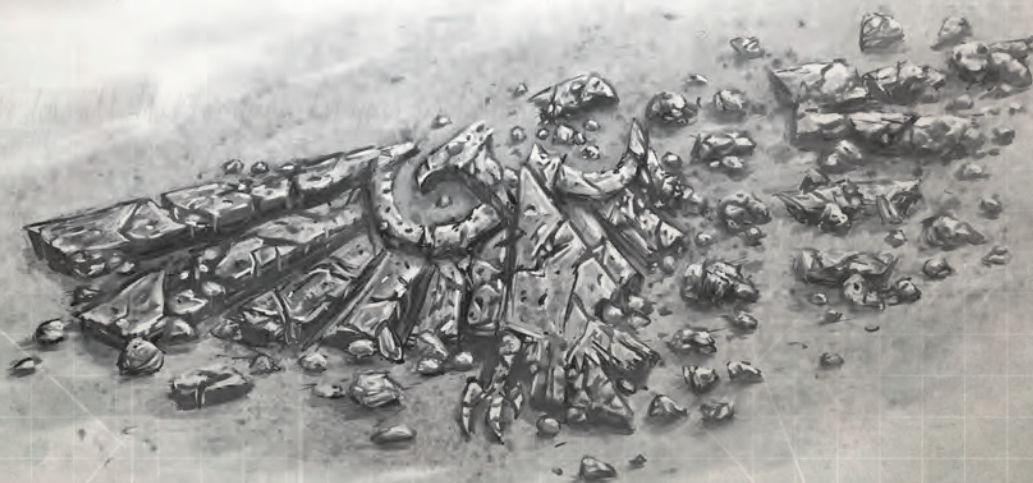
— Inquisitor Globus Vaarak, informal address to retinue.

S cintilla—ancient, vast, powerful, corrupt. The capital of the Calixis Sector embraces moral decay with the same zeal that other more wholesome worlds cleave to martial honour or faultless piety. Indeed, corruption is so inherent to the culture of Scintilla's mighty hives that they might literally cease to function without it. Strange then that a sect such as the Joyous Choir would arise on such a world... Barely five years old, the Joyous Choir is a growing cult. The Ecclesiarchy approves of the "Choir" as it actively promotes a relatively benign version of the Imperial Creed, though not as yet formally accepted. The Joyous Choir believes, naively enough, that the Emperor wants all of His subjects to be happy. They hold that it is their duty to seek to be as contented as possible with their lives, ever striving towards being at perfect harmony with their place in the Imperium. They refer to their philosophy as the state of being "True", embracing the notion that the "Truer" they are, the more likely that the Emperor will smile on them and that good luck will surely follow.

This quaint viewpoint is not so different from a thousand other variants of the Imperial Creed—what's interesting is that members of

the sect have undeniably prospered. Membership in the Joyous Choir has become a fad among the younger members of the noble houses of Scintilla and it's swiftly catching on among the middle-hivers as well. Cynics declare that the Joyous Choir is nothing more than the newest fad, sure to be gone within a few seasons. These sceptics point out an obvious reason why the cult's members are prospering: all of the rich young nobles with money to burn are bankrolling the differing projects and schemes of their fellow Choir members—nothing at all mystical about that. The Inquisition would normally be inclined to agree with the detractors, however, evidence has recently been discovered that is not so easily dismissed.

While the low-ranking members of the Joyous Choir truly believe that they are working for a legitimate faith, the Choir is in fact a lucrative front for a group of black market merchants who deal in a particularly dangerous commodity: psykers. The Joyous Choir employs individuals known as Counsellors who specialise in assisting adherents to their cult in becoming True. Counsellors employ a wide variety of methods in assisting their charges' quest, including workshops, group discussions, individual therapy sessions and



stimulant additives—all of which can cost a great deal of Imperial thrones. Cult members that prove their devotion are invited to participate in more “intensive” sessions. Counsellors at all tiers of the Choir’s organisation employ small hand-held devices that they refer to as “harmony meters” which assist in determining how “out of balance” a cult member is and what may help them to become True. While the majority of the harmony meters do nothing more than trace energy patterns through the body, a small portion actually detect levels of psychic activity which the cult’s practices can subtly stimulate and potentially enhance. When a member of the Joyous Choir becomes “ripe” they simply disappear...

Which is where the Acolytes come in.

FAITH IS A POTENT NARCOTIC

Caros Shoal was once a shady merchant possessed of both undeniable charisma and a dubious reputation. Shoal first made his mark on Scintilla by the acquiring and selling of exquisite pieces of broken masonry supposedly extracted from the most antiquated portions of the shattered underhive of Hive Sibellus. These pieces of history gave him a cachet amongst the history-obsessed nobility of the hive, and he rose to prominence in what passes for polite society on Scintilla. Alas, his fame undid him, for as his celebrity increased, so too did the questions regarding the authenticity of a number of his greatest “finds”. When it was undeniably established that virtually all of his pieces of masonry were actually forgeries, Shoal swiftly made excuses, declaring that he too had been deceived along with his clients, blaming the crime upon his unnamed supplier. He repaid a minor portion of their funds to his most wrathful clients then fled with the Magistratum right behind.

Shoal wandered for a time, trying his hand at various swindles until a man who called himself Theodosia approached him. Theodosia offered Shoal a most unusual bargain; he claimed to represent a group of investors that wanted access to a certain commodity. The group felt that Shoal was the right man to leverage their way into Scintilla’s upper society. In exchange

for settling his debts and smoothing over his past difficulties with the law, Shoal would help set up an organisation that would help facilitate his new patron’s request. Shoal quickly agreed and, over a relatively short amount of time, the former merchant recreated himself as a preacher, correctly guessing that he could more easily sway Imperial society with the power of faith. Thus the Joyous Choir was born.

Shoal started small at first, focusing on the downtrodden citizens of the hive and building up a loyal cadre of followers. Theodosia and his backers supplied what sums Shoal needed for his initial set-up, however, the Choir’s spiralling success soon rendered ongoing monetary assistance unnecessary. Shoal’s brilliant scheme to quietly bankroll his cult members into prominence has worked perfectly. In just five years, Shoal’s little cult has slowly but surely gained eminence—the moment it caught on with the bored young scions of the nobility, Shoal knew that the Joyous Choir had truly arrived at last. Theodosia has occasionally assisted Shoal over the years, coming and going with some frequency, usually with “cargo” in tow. In time, Shoal discovered that the group Theodosia fronts for was known as the Serrated Query, however, he knows nothing more about his patrons than this: that the fiercest underhive scum that he had ever hired went as pale as alkali dust when they heard Theodosia whisper but a hint of their actual employer’s name. That, and the riches that the Choir have brought him, means that he asks few questions, merely delivering psykers as asked. Shoal is starting to get very worried though as his personal history tells him that great success always seems to draw the “wrong” sort of attention. Sadly for poor Caros, his instincts haven’t failed him. Not only is the Inquisition very interested in his new cult, but also followers of Slaanesh, the Chaos god of illicit pleasures, have begun to infiltrate his congregation, drawn in by the rumours that the upper echelons of the Joyous Choir are involved in all sorts of delicious and illegal activities—which of course, they are. In addition to the business of supplying psykers, Shoal and his most trusted followers are active in moving a drug for the Serrated Query, a potent narcotic called farcosia. This highly addictive drug causes a powerful high to its users, who report that they can see “the threads that hold the galaxy together” when under the drug’s influence. Shoal’s ongoing anxieties have finally prompted him to begin seriously looking into the background of his mysterious patrons. So far, all he has discovered is that Theodosia appears to operate from the eternally moving desert city of Ambulon, whence the farcosia comes...

ORDO INVOLVEMENT

This is a brief rundown on what the various Ordos know about the situation and their possible involvement. Some or most of this information may be available to the players depending on who their Inquisitor is and what the Acolytes' relationship is like with him or her.

ORDO HERETICUS INVOLVEMENT

High Sorteliger Lethe Tarriacta of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica is responsible for monitoring the psyker population of the Calixis Sector and advising Lord Commander Hax thereupon. Recently, she has noticed that for the last two years Scintilla's psyker tithe is unusually smaller than it should be. It's one thing for some far flung planet in the hinterspace subsectors to have some psykers go astray—it's quite another for the sector capital to come up short. Curious for answers and concerned at the implications, she contacted the Inquisition, formally requesting the assistance of Ordo Hereticus in investigating whether there was an explanation for the decrease in psyker numbers. A "quiet" investigation revealed that several individuals noted as having high psychic potential have indeed gone missing and their only connection seems to be membership in a cult called the Joyous Choir.

ORDO XENOS INVOLVEMENT

The Imperial Navy has recently apprehended a group of smugglers with contraband xenos technology. While this is not uncommon in the Calixis Sector, the smugglers are normally headed out of the Hazeroth Abyss, not away from Scintilla itself! The illicit movement of xenogen tech from the capital of the sector does not sit well with the Inquisition at all. Interrogation of the smugglers revealed little, other than that an unknown group, possibly based out of Hive Sibellus, called the "Serrated Query" had hired them. Certain Ordo Xenos Inquisitors would very much like to have a "chat" with others involved in their operation, which apparently has connections to the highest society. The name, "Alabaster Court" came up one to many times to be a coincidence...

ORDO MALLEUS INVOLVEMENT

At this point Ordo Malleus has no direct interest in the Joyous Choir. However, they are keeping an eye on their opposite numbers in Ordo Hereticus. After all, where there are witches...

UNCOVERING THE TRUTH OF THE TRUE

Rejoice For You Are True is the "intrigue" adventure, placing your players' Acolytes undercover in order to investigate an outwardly harmless group, which hides a number of dangerous and illegal practices. The adventure starts with the Acolytes being summoned by their Inquisitor, who has recently received a very unusual piece of information from an old contact, nobleman Laurent Strophes, a scion of the Maechenko. Strophes, worried about his missing niece, had decided to quietly investigate the Joyous Choir, the cult that she was a member of. His investigations have turned up a harmony meter built using xenos technology—not enough to automatically condemn, but surely very suspicious. The sample that Strophes supplied to the Inquisition immediately painted a far more interesting picture: the xenos circuitry within the meter is identical to that of the tainted Emperor's Tarot card that survived at the climax of *Illumination*—see **DARK HERESY** page 387.

Strophes and his daughter Julia will assist the Acolytes in taking on the roles of "visiting cousins" and a "group of retainers" suitable for minor nobles, so that they may better infiltrate the upper echelons of the Joyous Choir in Hive Sibellus on Scintilla. This will be an adventure in itself, as the ostentatious ways of Sibellus's nobles will take some getting used to. While some of the Acolytes are mingling with the nobility, others will be hitting the vast streets of the middle hive in order to build a better picture of the Choir. All of the Acolytes will soon uncover more than they bargained for, though, as a number of dangerous individuals with widely varying agendas are also interested or involved in the Choir's activities. The characters will soon encounter a most unusual drug, farcosia, which the Choir is directly involved in supplying. Clever Acolytes will eventually manipulate their way into an invitation to the Alabaster Court, Caros Shoal's personal congregation. Bloodshed may possibly ensue.

A trail of hints and rumour will lead the Acolytes out to the deserts of Scintilla, to the artefact beetle-machine city known as Ambulon. Upon arriving at the "restless city" and consulting a most unusual oracle, the Acolytes will have to confront members of the Serrated Query to finally discover what exactly has been happening to the missing psykers and, hopefully, put an end to it.

THE MATTER OF THE METER

The events of this adventure occur approximately half a sidereal year after the events of the introductory adventure, *Illumination*, in DARK HERESY. Acolytes who participated in the fell actions that occurred at the Black Cathedral on Iocanthos have since recovered and have been summoned by their Inquisitor to a low orbit meeting above the planet Scintilla. If you are running this adventure immediately after *Illumination*, feel free to gloss over the intervening time, but make a point of mentioning the long journey involved in getting to Scintilla from Iocanthos.

This adventure presumes that the Acolytes triumphed against the Dancer at the Threshold and turned such evidence as they could gather, including the last surviving card of the Emperor's Tarot deck used by Aristarchus, over to the Inquisition along with their reports of the incident. GMs that didn't run *Illumination* previously, who are bringing Acolytes in from their own adventures, or are running this adventure as a one-off game, can look to the Ordos Involvement (see opposite) for suggestions on other ways to bring their PCs into the events of this adventure. You can just as easily, if you wish, narrate the PCs Inquisitor discussing how the xenos-corrupted card came to be in his hands, what it means and how the same circuitry has since been found within a harmony meter.

The information that follows should be tailored for your group and their Inquisitor's individual style. However, for simplicity, instead of continually referring to a "generic Inquisitor", Globus Vaarak

INQUISITOR GLOBUS VAARAK

Vaarak's long years of service to the Inquisition have cost him dearly. His body is broken, scarred and bloated. Both of his legs and one arm have been replaced with mechanical constructs built into an encompassing life-support system. Tubes festoon his pockmarked face, running from his nose and mouth and head. The ribbed black body-glove he wears scarcely contains his immense bulk. Despite his ancient injuries, or perhaps because of them, Vaarak has an imposing presence. His dark eyes stare intently at whoever he is speaking to, his voice deep and craggy.

A puritan, Vaarak is firmly of the Amalathian persuasion, believing that the status quo must be maintained at all costs and that change is both dangerous and unnecessary. He seeks out sedition and rebellion in order to ensure that the precarious balance of power within the Calixis Sector remains stable. Vaarak is ever watchful of the great houses, sects and worker's guilds of Calixis.

These days, Vaarak utilises a pool of acolytes to prosecute his investigations, as he can no longer go about as a "normal" citizen. Wherever possible, he encourages his acolytes to be subtle in their work, preferring their activities to remain clandestine. Regardless of his hard-line stance, Vaarak is an adept social chameleon, often exceedingly personable, sometimes "playing" the role of a dottering old fool—whatever persona he can best employ to gain the "trust" of those around him. Many an acolyte has underestimated Vaarak, believing their master to a benevolent and kindly old man, only to find themselves at the mercy of his razor-sharp mind and tongue.

For further information about **Globus Vaarak** see page 320 in DARK HERESY.



TIMELINE

This timeline details the flow of events within the scenario. Note, however, that depending on the actions of the Acolytes some events may occur out of sequence or not at all.

Day 1: Acolytes arrive on Hive Sibellus and meet the Strophes.

Day 2: Acolytes prepare their cover and meet with the bounty hunter Vorlin Orday.

Day 3: Lady Borella's soiree.

Day 4: Acolytes travel to the Hustle to meet with Vorlin Orday to obtain the data-slate. Theodosia appears and kills Orday.

Day 5: The Alabaster Court. There is a possible attack on House Strophes.

Day 6: Acolytes travel to Ambulon seeking answers. The final confrontation with Theodosia.

of Ordo Hereticus shall play the role of the Acolyte's employer throughout the adventures in *Purge the Unclean*.

The Acolytes have all assembled upon the free trading vessel the *Verdant Glory*, mastered by Chartist Captain Baltis Mecather—a Rogue Trader trusted by the Inquisition to courier sensitive documents and other more dangerous cargo. The *Verdant Glory* hangs, gothic and pristine, against the eyesore that is Scintilla from space.

Inquisitor Vaarak allows the Acolytes to rest a day after their journey if they've come a long way before calling them all to a briefing meeting in one of the *Verdant Glory*'s largest forward studies, Captain Mecather's ready room in fact. By the time the Acolytes arrive, Vaarak has already ensconced himself in the corner of the room, as his immense bulk and the apparatus by which he transports it are not easily moved. Vaarak is surrounded by a group of hovering Familiars, modified skulls and otherwise, that orbit about him like tiny satellites about a grotesquely bloated star. The Familiars carry data-slates and several project flickering holographs that Vaarak continues to smoothly peruse as the PCs enter the room. Vaarak nods towards the Acolytes and a servoskull, loaded down with a serving tray, floats over to deliver a selection of drinks, alcoholic and otherwise, to the PCs. Once they've chosen a beverage or declined he gestures towards a large ornately engraved wooden table with matching chairs.

After a suitable amount of small talk, Vaarak launches into the following preamble:

"Gentlemen, ladies, thank you for coming. Your efforts have shed more light on a most elusive puzzle and while I was looking forward to running it down myself, I'll not begrudge your efforts. I've read your reports with interest... Great interest, indeed."

Vaarak reaches forward with his heavily augmented metal left arm and taps a control panel. A holographic display showing the twisted blank visage of the Magus—the Emperor's Tarot card that you acquired at the Black Cathedral on Iocanthos, flickers into view over the table and begins slowly rotating.

"I'm certain you all recognise your souvenir. Aristarchus was a good man and a trusted ally for many years. I want to know what happened to him. I think the seer's fall was orchestrated, but to what purpose I cannot say. I turned many of my resources towards this gift of yours. Extensive cross-checking turned up nothing and I all but killed three of my autosavants at the task, when a very old friend of mine contacted

me early last month. Laurent Strophes, ex-Imperial navy, retired with honour, noble family connected to the Maechenko. First met him back in the days when I had a svelte physique. One of his nieces has gone missing. It happens, especially on Scintilla where he berths these days... but usually not in Hive Sibellus. Still, he wouldn't have contacted me over such a matter. He set some skilled locals to quietly searching. The only reliable link they came up with connected to a small new creed called the Joyous Choir."

(Give the players Player Handout 1.1: Joyous Choir Pamphlet.)

"Seems they think the Emperor wants us all to be happy or some other such nonsense. Even check to make certain people are in high spirits using, 'harmony meters'. Strophes' men got their hands on a few of them. The majority held no surprises, but one had this."

A second display shimmers to life next to the first, showing a series of intricate lines criss-crossed with small nodes. Even those among you with no knowledge of the hidden secrets of technology can easily see that the patterns depicted on the two holograms are identical.

"Now what do you make of that, eh?"

Vaarak lets the Acolytes speculate for a while, stating what little he knows from time to time. The images are circuitry patterns though the word "circuitry" is unlikely to mean anything to someone who hasn't been trained by the Adeptus Mechanicus. What is clear though, is that the harmony meter and the Tarot card have the same xenos technology laced into them. The Inquisition's experts haven't been able to determine exactly what it is that the corrupt xenos circuits "do", however. A technically inclined Acolyte who asks to see the harmony meter will be allowed to do so. Vaarak calls in a servitor bearing the device if asked. A **Routine (+20) Tech-Use Test** will show that the meter clearly reads energy patterns, which Vaarak's scholars had already figured out. Three or more degrees of success will reveal that the meter spikes when used on a psyker—though there obviously has to be a psyker present for this to be determined. If an Acolyte manages to reveal this, Vaarak will mutter, *"Throne and thunder. That cannot be a good thing, eh?"* Obviously, this will add to the tenor of the overall discussion.

Allow the players to discuss the harmony meter and its possible uses until they've run out of ideas, at which point Vaarak says:

"I need you to go to Hive Sibellus and find out what exactly is going on with this Joyous Choir and how they're involved with this xenos tech. My friend has volunteered to take on a great and terrible risk: the lot of you. Laurent and his daughter Julia are willing to take you in as 'distant cousins' which should help you gain access to this new faith's inner circle. I have other duties to attend to, but I'll be expecting your report within a month. I've set up some shielded accounts for you to draw upon in order to maintain your cover as nobles; the Strophes will help you with the rest. I hope you've been keeping up with your ballroom dancing. Do not expose yourselves as agents of the Inquisition to anyone other than the Strophes unless you have absolutely no other choice. Be careful, on Scintilla corruption is a way of life."

Vaarak answers any other questions that the Acolytes have to the best of his ability, though

he doesn't know much more than what has already been stated. The Acolytes' remit is to investigate the Joyous Choir. Regardless of what they find, they aren't supposed to attempt to destroy them or anything equally rash, though clear heresy should be dealt with at their discretion. The Inquisition has already investigated the Joyous Choir's resources and their money seems legitimate, which is part of the reason why someone must now go in undercover. Vaarak states that Strophes and his daughter are completely trustworthy. The Acolytes can send a vox message via coded Inquisition channels, which will eventually be transferred on to Vaarak—but the minimum amount of time between them sending the message and him hearing it will be about ten days. In addition to access to some limited accounts, the Acolytes are given false identity documents that can be filled in as necessary along with any basic equipment that they may require for undercover work, as well as a data-slate with copies of the schematics for the xenos technology.

Let the Acolytes discuss their situation for a bit and then move on to the next scene.

Be at Peace with

The Joyous Choir!

Greetings citizen, may the many blessings of the God-Emperor be upon you!

Are you Seeking Peace and Contentment?

So many citizens of our mighty Imperium go about their daily lives with despair in their hearts, never finding the inner peace and tranquillity offered by our most benevolent Emperor. We of the Joyous Choir believe that every citizen can be helped to find the everlasting peace the Emperor has prepared for us.

Seek Your Heart's Desire

Do you wish to live without taint and fear? Secure in the knowledge that work and live in a glorious Imperium free from idleness, where all can prosper and rise to great heights, secure in the Emperor's magnificence. By working together we bring harmony to one another's lives and ensure a cheerful and joyous existence for all.

Through the Joyous Choir, you may seek to become 'True'. Being 'True' means that you are on the path to fully understanding and finding your true place within the Imperium of Mankind. The joy that comes from this knowledge and the acceptance of your role, as a productive member of the greatest civilization in the universe, is unlimited.

Your Next Step To Inner Joy

We only want the best for all Imperial citizens. Come to any of our gatherings and see for yourself the inner peace that the Joyous Choir has brought into our member's lives. This can be yours too; the door is open for you.

IN THE HOUSE OF STROPHES

Vaarak arranges for the Acolytes to be transported planetside in an unmarked aquila lander. As their craft drops down into Scintilla's atmosphere, you can read or paraphrase the following:

As you come down out of the raging clouds, Hive Sibellus looms before you. A vast structure, formed of ornately carved stonework, shaped in countless styles and built up over more than ten thousand years, Sibellus stretches to the horizon. Immediately below you, a series of titanic black granite cliffs mark the western edge of the hive, which still threatens to spill over into the wildly churning sea.

As you draw closer, more details emerge. Thousands upon thousands of scaffolds are constructed over the cliffs, with small moving forms that must be men scurrying up and down rope lines, or disappearing into and out of the uncountable caves that cover the face of the granite walls. A gleaming solitary tower surmounted by what resembles an immense stone flower catches the light of the sun from where it stands apart from the rest of the hive. Hundreds of banners flutter above the legendary Lucid Palace, seat of Lord Sector Marius Hax's government of the Calixis Sector. Your vessel angles its descent towards your destination: a large docking port thrusting out from the lower portions of the massive upswept spires that rest atop the hive.

As your group emerges from the lander to a lightly drizzling rain that smells faintly of gunmetal, a short woman with fiery-red hair awaits you on the landing pad with a big smile. She immediately sweeps forward, throwing her arms about the neck of the least scruffy looking member of your group with a squeal and a "Welcome to Sibellus, Cousin!"

She gestures and a black-clad servant brings forward a series of parcels that she immediately distributes. They prove to be soft-grey hooded cloaks. She looks about and states pointedly, "There'll be time for talking later, inside. A bit too drafty and wet out here I think. Make certain you all cover up, you could catch a chill." She links her arm with one of you. "So, how was your journey?"

As the Acolytes leave the landing platform, they immediately enter an ornately decorated corridor, with no surface untouched by artifice of some variety or another. Bas-reliefs cover the walls and ceiling, darkly sombre cracked tile mosaics cover the floor. Some of the artwork depicts recognizably Imperial figures, but the majority are worn away by the passage of time. The group soon passes through a massive archway that opens into a 100' high geodesic dome. A large tree, easily three-quarters the size of the room, dominates the centre of the open space. A hundred or more balconies look out onto the tree. Have the Acolytes make an **Easy (+30) Awareness Test**. Any level of success indicates that they are being watched by a fair number of people—though no one in specific if they state they want to know "who" is watching them. The answer is "everyone"—grey-robed servants that are passing by down the corridors of the hive, the gaily attired entourage of a feather-clad matron that sweeps past their party, the armed men swathed in dark green robes that stand about the base of the tree: everyone. In point of fact, whenever the Acolytes go abroad in the noble districts of Hive Sibellus, they should all receive the distinct impression that they are being constantly studied, as if everyone around them is evaluating them at all times.

Their guide chooses a corridor that looks to the Acolytes almost no different from any other and speeds them down it. After several twists and turns, the group arrives at a large metal door covered with a silver and blue pattern pierced by a single red dagger. The woman gestures with a ringed hand and the door swings silently inward. As the Acolytes enter the building, she swiftly dismisses her servant and brings the PCs into a richly attired chamber where a man stands in the corner, surveying the room, his arms outstretched in a welcoming gesture. She closes the doors behind the party and says, "Let us try that again, shall we? I'm Julia Strophes, welcome to Hive Sibellus." She smiles impishly, "Cousins."

One or two of the Acolytes will probably look expectantly at the man in the corner. Julia notes their expressions, walks over and knocks on the man's head. "Great Uncle Thalus, led House Strophes in dark times," she explains. "We nobles of Sibellus appreciate our antiquity so much we keep our honoured dead about to remind us of past glories. He has his uses I suppose," she says as she tosses her cloak over one of the cadaver's outstretched arms. "Make yourselves comfortable, there's refreshment in that alcove. I'll bring Father and we'll have proper introductions." She nods with a slight bow and departs.

THE STROPHES

JULIA STROPHES

Julia wears brightly coloured garments with long trails that swirl about her feet as she moves. Her bright red hair is cut short about her neck. A cheerful and headstrong woman, Julia disdains the normal activities that most young noblewomen of Hive Sibellus regularly fill their time with, a trait she blames on her beloved hard-headed father. Julia sees the presence of the Acolytes as an exciting adventure, far better than the banal existence she usually endures. Julia is an exception in some ways to the typical Sibellus noble outlook as she is worried about her cousin and does care about people in a vague sort of way. Note, however, that the lives of middle-hivers are less important in her eyes than her fellow nobles, to say nothing of underhivers, who may as well be made of disposable plastic. The Acolytes, as members of the Inquisition, she regards as equal to her own class and treats them accordingly. If any of the PCs is clearly of the lower classes and acts it, she'll be a bit put off and not know quite how to react to them, mainly because she's never actually had to before.



LAURENT STROPHES

Nobleman Strophes is a broad man, resembling a large stump with legs. His left arm and right eye are graceful prosthetics of adamantine and silver, clearly worth a fortune. He wears loose fitting garments and keeps his head shaved. Strophes speaks with a forceful ringing tone and stands with an erect posture that instantly gives him away as a former officer of the Imperial Navy. His daughter has managed to bring out a muted sense of humour in him, though, and he isn't as grim as one may expect from his appearance. He is very straightforward, with no hidden agenda—he truly only wishes to discover what happened to his niece. Strophes is honoured that his House has been called upon to help the Inquisition and extends the Acolytes every courtesy.

Both the **Strophes's** profiles can be found on **page 48**.

INTRIGUE AND THE TELEPATH

Running DARK HERESY mysteries with a telepathic psyker about can be a challenge. You can all but forget straightforward murder plots. A few quick mind scans and the psyker declares, “The Seneschal did it. The knife he used is buried at the bottom of a rubbish bin in Sector 3.” Murder solved. In fact, if psykers were more commonly accepted in the Imperium, quite a few crimes would become harder to perpetrate. However, most Imperial institutions remain leery about regular use of an individual who might be a conduit for warp spawned monstrosities—they’re funny that way. One of the many reasons that the Inquisition has such a ruthless and fearsome reputation is its members’ proven ability to get to the bottom of “unsolvable” mysteries, a facility often afforded by the use of psykers. Fortunately for your games within the context of the Imperium, the bad guys know the score as psykers have been around for tens of thousands of years.

So what does this mean? Low-level criminals, underhive scum and such rarely succeed in hiding anything of value from a competent psyker. The really dangerous criminals, the leaders of cults dedicated to the Ruinous Powers corrupt local or Imperial authorities are all very aware of this—just as they are aware that the Inquisition regularly employs psykers. So what do they do about it? They hide their agendas, cloak their motives and work through “blinds”. A blind is an organisation or individual brought into a plot with only enough information to get done whatever task their employer wishes them to accomplish. Assassins hired through an anonymous drop, knowing nothing about why they were asked to kill or on whose request, only that they have been well paid and given a target is one sort of blind. Another is an organisation that exists to promote an agenda that suits its founders’ interests but not their aims—for example: founding a group dedicated to stopping the use of illegal drugs so that you can claim higher profits from your illegal drug distribution network. Some agents are routinely given false knowledge, set up to take a fall if they are caught with someone other than their true employer as the scapegoat. Truly dangerous foes can arrange to have fake memories or even whole identities overlaid onto their agents by their own, often covert, psykers.

If one of your group’s Acolytes is a psyker, give some thought to what any given individual may know or be thinking about at any given moment as well as where they’ve been and what they’ve done in the past, so if your player tries to surprise you by having his telepath mind scan the suspicious addict, or the diviner does a psychometric reading on the junkie’s knife, you’ll already have some sort of an idea of how your plot may be revealed by Psychic Powers. Keep in mind, though, that the warp is darkly treacherous and information gleaned from it is not always entirely reliable. Work with the fact that you have a psyker, crafting adventures that are enhanced by the use of the immaterium’s influence to reinforce the feel of DARK HERESY rather than try to limit a psyker Acolyte’s effectiveness.

The Acolytes will probably wish to inspect the room a bit before their noble hosts arrive. Great Uncle Thalys is amazingly well preserved. Only his lack of breathing and a touch his rock hard skin reveals him to be other than alive. His clothes have been preserved with some sort of sealant that helps preserve them against time’s ravages. The room resembles a large study, with various plush furniture pieces analogous to couches and easy chairs. Various artefacts sit on little end tables next to each of the furnishings. A complex timepiece of some sort is on one. A worn leather copy of the Imperial Creed sits on another. Most impressive of all is a figurine seemingly made from light itself that slowly twirls about in an intricate pattern. As one or more of the Acolytes studies the gleaming statuette, a deep voice tells them, “The prize of my collection, a Jokaero light-sculpture. Not proscribed, I assure you.”

Laurent Strophes smoothly enters the room nodding to the Acolytes as he does so. Julia closes the doors behind her father.

Strophes introduces himself by shaking hands with the various Acolytes. He is deeply respectful of any religious figures, making a special point of welcoming them, for example: “We are honoured that you grace our house, Father.”

After he’s shaken everyone’s hand, Strophes asks after Inquisitor Vaarak, “How is the old war dog, eh?” Finally, he situates himself in a big chair and launches into a speech—read aloud or paraphrase the following:

“My niece, Saia, was an even-tempered girl, easy to manage—unlike others here present. Always given over to melancholy though. Last year she came upon this group, this so called ‘Joyous Choir’ and joined soon after. I thought it harmless enough. Julia went with her once or twice, declared them simple-minded as I recall, right dear? Well Saia continued going, said that she finally felt that she was becoming ‘true’ whatever that may entail. Then one day, she vanished. No traces. The Magistratum could find nothing. There was no sign of struggle in her dwelling; none of her friends knew where she’d gone. Happens every day in the underhive, not in the spire. We’ve since heard of others going quietly missing. I set an old associate of mine to looking into the Choir’s affairs. He came up with those meters I passed on to your master. I want to find out what happened to my niece. I suspect she’s gone to the Emperor, but I would know for certain. The House of Strophes is at your disposal. Julia and I will help you however we can.”

Strophes and Julia will answer any of the Acolytes’ questions to the best of their ability. The plan, insofar as the Strophes understand it, is to help one or more of the Acolytes take on the role of visiting nobles, while the rest act as entourage

members, since the higher levels of the Choir are only accessible to nobles. The Strophes have decided that the best cover for any lapse of appropriate knowledge that the “noble” Acolytes would be expected to know should be to claim that they’re distant cousins visiting from Fenksworld, a sordid little hive world rimward from Scintilla. Since most nobles of Scintilla consider Fenksworld to be a cultural backwater, this should allow an Acolyte without the right background to still “wing it” as an uncouth noble.

Julia knows of an upcoming party where a fair number of Joyous Choir followers will be, including some high society members who are directly involved in the cult. The party presents the perfect opportunity for the undercover Acolytes to ingratiate themselves with the movers and shakers of Sibellus’ society, as well as learn more about the Choir’s activities.

Julia declares that she’ll need some time before the party to arrange appropriate attire, brief them on the latest spire customs for this season and generally bring the Acolytes up to speed on their “roles”.

This is where you get to have some fun—Julia picking out the Acolytes, along with the PCs input, who are the best suited to playing nobles. Obviously, if one or more of your PCs comes from a noble background, they’re a clear choice. The fun one’s will be those like, say, a handsome Imperial Guardsman, *“Oh, that armour just won’t do. You have such lovely hands. We’ll have your nails done, add some highlights to your hair...”*

While the Acolytes are discussing how they wish to proceed, Strophes will also offer to arrange a meeting for them with the associate of his who retrieved the harmony meters, a bounty hunter called Vorlin Orday. Strophes says that he can set the meeting up at the Acolytes’ convenience, but notes that Orday will only be willing to meet them somewhere within the middle spire as he has had past “difficulties” with the Magistratum. Pointed questions on that score will bring a shrug from Strophes and a curt, *“I hire for results, not good behaviour.”*

The Strophes’ household easily accommodates the Acolytes in well-appointed rooms, though they will be advised not to wander around the house without a guide. The Strophes choose a wing on the second floor of the house for the Acolytes, clearing it of servants in order to facilitate privacy and keep tongues from wagging. Before retiring for the evening, Laurent gives the PCs data-slates with maps of the surrounding spire for thirty kilometres around his home, as well as several rough layouts of the western portions of Sibellus’s middle hive so they can familiarise themselves with the hive’s general layout. Laurent also makes certain that

the Acolytes have a pict of Saia Strophes, “Just in case”. He will also answer any questions they might have about the Magistratum and is fairly knowledgeable about Hive Sibellus law—see the Hive Sibellus Law sidebar.

POMP UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES

Early the next day, Julia Strophes proceeds to bring the Acolytes up to speed. Regardless of whether they’re playing a “noble” or a member of the noble’s retinue, they’ll need to pay attention as she briefs them on what is expected. Those playing entourage members don’t need to remember as much, but they can also potentially get in far more trouble if they screw up or insult the wrong person. As the PCs may have noted when they first entered Hive Sibellus, the actions and appearances of those in the upper hive spire are carefully scrutinised. One of the difficult aspects of playing the noble’s role is that nobles do not go to the middle hive (and certainly never the underhive!) without very specific reasons, as slumming among the middle-hivers is what servants and lackeys are for. In other words, those that end up playing at being a noble aren’t going to be doing any legwork or following up leads with the other PCs in the middle hive. Then again, entourage members won’t be allowed to go everywhere that a noble can...

Acolytes playing entourage members fall into two basic categories: entertainers and bodyguards.

Bodyguards are well regarded in Sibellus as, in addition to their obvious normal duties, Scintilla’s practice of trial by combat leads many skilled bodyguards to be asked to stand in for their noble patrons. Either way, it generally isn’t considered wise to insult the man or woman who may be called upon to save your life. Bodyguards never speak unless first spoken to or a security matter arises, and they are never to offer an opinion on anything unless they’ve specifically been asked to do so first. Bodyguards are also allowed to carry heavier weaponry in public than most citizens. Laurent has the right connections to be able to get any of the Acolytes that requests it a bodyguard licence within a day or so, but notes that any of those licensed are required to register their

HIVE SIBELLUS LAW

Scintilla barely bothers with even the pretence of equal law enforcement and nowhere is this so evident as in Hive Sibellus. Nobles of the spire expect and receive immediate attention from the Magistratum, Scintilla’s police force, for any crime they care to report. Nobles who regularly give to Magistratum “charity” funds get the more competent officers assigned to their cases. Those of the middle spire will be assigned a greencoat if the crime was particularly noteworthy or violent. Few officers have the courage or the inclination to go into the depths of Sibellus’s underhive.

Without the appropriate permits from the correct governmental organs, power armour is not allowed in Hive Sibellus. Such permits cause questions to be asked, questions that undercover Acolytes will be keen to avoid. Personal weapons are permitted, even expected, as Scintillan law legally allows both trial by combat and duelling. Heavy weapons, however, are also proscribed without express permits. A bolter is a dead giveaway that someone is very well connected indeed, though bolt pistols are not unknown amidst noble bodyguards.

If the Acolytes go around looking like walking arsenals, they will be harassed or even detained. If they limit themselves to one or two concealable weapons, perhaps getting away with a larger or more obvious side arm in the case of Acolytes posing as bodyguards within a noble’s retinue, they’ll avoid unwelcome Magistratum scrutiny. Remember that the Acolytes are meant to be undercover and should not draw undue attention to themselves, something their hosts should make very clear.



weapons and give a tissue sample. While the tissue sample could easily be faked, a gun's owner and registration is put on file with the Magistratum, who check such records frequently.

Acolytes that are part of a noble's entourage for "colour" purposes are expected to have some exotic skill or talent that they can display upon request, be exceptionally witty, or be incredibly fun to look at. If they are intelligent and good conversationalists, they are allowed to contribute to the discussion of the nobles around them, but they're expected to defer to their patron. Entourage members can freely speak with the retinue members of other nobles, which, Julia notes, is a great way to pick up and spread gossip. It's also the manner by which many nobles set up illicit encounters, romantic and otherwise, as they use their followers to act as go-betweens.

Those playing nobles have the far more difficult role ahead of them, as insulting a "fellow noble" can lead directly to a trip to the Bloodsquares and a duel on Scintilla. In Hive Sibellus, the most important rule to remember is never to slight another's ancestors or lineage, unless one is spoiling for a fight. Since the noble houses of

Sibellus greatly value their artefact collections, the next biggest faux pas is either to insult a given possession or call its authenticity into question. Finally, the nobles of Scintilla place little value on the lives of middle-hivers and assess underhivers as worthless trash—this last trait may sit poorly with an honourably inclined Acolyte. Julia notes that such concerns seldom arise, but the Acolytes being "from Fenskworld" can explain away any differences on that score.

The present fashion in Sibellus is referred to as "aethyr weaving". The elite wear fairly gauzy outfits strung through with electrographs and other materials to produce various subtle lighting effects. Young and attractive members of the upper classes highlight their bodies so that their silhouettes are clearly visible along the outside of their clothing. Older and more reserved nobles favour dark clothing with star patterns resembling constellations. To better enhance the effect of their chosen attire, most noble gatherings this season are being held in dark rooms varying from twilight to pitch black. Julia delights in helping the Acolytes pick out appropriate attire.

BUT WE DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

One of the trickier points of running an investigative adventure, especially one with a lot of intrigue, is getting information to your players without them thinking you're just handing it to them. They want to feel like they're working for it. At the same time, some pieces of information are absolutely vital for an investigation to proceed. Never base whether or not your Acolytes can learn a crucial piece of information on a single Test, because, if they fail the Test, your adventure immediately stalls—which is no fun for anyone involved. Anything that you know the Acolytes have to learn, think of several ways they can learn it. If they fail or miss one path, simply introduce it another way—your players will never know that they would have learned a certain key fact no matter what they did unless you tell them yourself.

Sibellus nobles revel in decking their entourages out in complementary garb, often in imitation of a specific piece of art or literature. This season's rage amidst the younger nobles of Hive Sibellus involves taking this common noble practice one step further. The younger scions of the noble houses choose a hiver "candidate" and offer him or her a place in their revels. The nobles then spend their evening enacting a famous (to nobles) play with the unsuspecting hiver called upon to act the lead role. The hiver has no idea what part he is playing let alone that he's supposed to be playing a part, so the laughter and cutting wit of the nobles surrounding him makes no sense, never mind that he'll have been injected with the drug spur to "enhance his performance". If the hiver manages to entertain, he's given a goodly sum and sent on his way, the bewildering evening a strange memory for years to come. Boring his patrons generally leads to an overdose as they inject more and more spur into him in the hope that he may finally provide some amusement. Known as "spurring" for obvious reasons, this cruel practice is ignored by the Magistratum as it's "all in good fun" and no one is "supposed" to be hurt by it. Julia makes certain that the Acolytes are aware of spurring because they will doubtless encounter it during their time in Sibellus and she doesn't want them to "overreact".

The Strophes's ongoing lessons help ground the Acolytes in Hive Sibellus's history and place in Scintilla. Encourage your players to read the section on Hive Sibellus on **page 293 of DARK HERESY**, as it's information that the Acolytes will all have a decent grasp of by the time their lessons are over.

This section can take as much or as little time as you wish. However, no doubt, the players will be eager to get on with the action so don't dwell on it for too long unless they want to. Once everyone is clear that they are posing as either nobles or their retinue, you can move the story along.

THE STREETS OF SIBELLUS

After a day of lessons, the Acolytes are free to start exploring the middle levels of Hive Sibellus as they start to search for answers about the Joyous Choir. Strophes announces that he has arranged for the bounty hunter Vorlin Orday to meet them in a middle-hive drinking joint called the Barking Saint in the early evening if they are so inclined. Strophes remarks that, "*Orday claims he's leaving the hive soon, so it's tonight or not at all.*"

Strophes reminds the Acolytes to be sure and take their identification credentials with them (presumably fake ones—but Inquisition-level fakes), as it will make their re-entry into the hive spire far easier.

The middle levels of Hive Sibellus are built from the lower foundations and the remains of ancient noble edifices that have crumbled down from the upper hive tiers. Hundreds of factoria devoted to the production of heavy machinery dominate Sibellus's middle-hive, and the greater bulk of the populace either works within one, or caters for those that do. When the Acolytes first travel down into Hive Sibellus's depths, relate the following to them:

It takes more than an hour to travel from the Strophes's estate to the nearest passage leading down to Sibellus's middle-hive. As you approach the opening to the city below, the polished tile floors and decadent wall carvings slowly give way to old cracked pavement and featureless grey walls. A line of heavily armed green-coated Magistratum troops bearing long ornately embellished poles ending in brilliant glass lanterns await you at the top of a massive spiralling series of broken stairs that stretch down into the darkness below. They eye you with a mixture of amusement and contempt as you pass them by. The lights of the stairwell are tarnished pipes from which emerge blue flames, many of which continually threaten to go out. As you descend, the sounds of heavy machinery churning in the distance rises to greet you, as does the harsh creaking of stone.

The stairwell soon levels off, eventually opening up onto a small courtyard filled with grey-robed workers, hawkers offering various stick-impaled meats of dubious origin, children with badges signifying which comm-service they work for dashing about carrying messages and a priest wearing flame emblazoned robes spraying spittle on those about him as he exhorts them all to give up their licentious ways. The floor shudders with the constant activity of the middle-hive's factoria and stone dust continually filters down from the countless tonnes of compacted broken masonry above your heads. What little light there is emanates from guttering tallow candles set in a wide variety of twisted and ancient metal fixtures coated in millennia of wax. The scent of loam is heavy in the still air and the shadows are long.

AN ATMOSPHERE FOR INTRIGUE

One of the keys to running an intrigue adventure is making the atmosphere reflect the often-deceitful nature of the protagonists. By noting and even highlighting disparities, you will help set your players thinking about the contrasts between actions and appearances. Intrigue in *DARK HERESY* focuses on the bleaker side of human nature: lust for power, cynicism, brutality, greed, twisted love, deliberate cruelty and bitter fatalism abound. A hive-city is thus a great place to set an adventure involving duplicity and hidden agendas. The disparity between squalor and wealth, brightly lit halls and shadowy retreats, echoes within the typical composition of an Imperial hive-city.

When describing the various portions of Hive Sibellus to your players, emphasise the sumptuous wealth of the nobles versus the working class poor of the middle-hive. Give a few choice details about the opulence of the Strophes' house and the richness of their furnishings. Note to the players that while the Acolytes are staying at the spire, they can on a whim, take a short stroll to an ob-

(continued opposite)

While the middle layers of Hive Sibellus hold many secrets, few of them are directly relevant to this particular adventure, though the PCs obviously won't know that at first. The Acolytes can find recruiters for the Joyous Choir with little effort by successfully making any suitable **Interaction Test at a Routine (+20)** level. The recruiters are, inevitably, stationed near the more well-to-do cults in the middle-hive. After first inspecting how well the Acolytes are dressed, they will be pleasant enough, giving them a copy of their standard brochure (**Player Handout 1.1: Joyous Choir Pamphlet**) if the PCs specifically request it. They know little of any real value to the Acolytes. A PC that wishes to can attend a ceremony in one of the small chapels dedicated to the Joyous Choir—it will seem pretty much like every other Imperial Creed experience the Acolyte has had, although preachers for the Choir do tend to emphasise the more “pleasant” aspects of the faith, leaving the Acolytes with the impression that the cult, at least outwardly, presents a positive and uplifting experience to its congregation.

Acolytes wishing to locate additional equipment may make appropriate **Inquiry Tests** to find items of Scarce Availability or lower (see page 126 of *DARK HERESY*). There are many possible sources and people willing to sell to the “undercover” Acolytes; whether it be a street market vendor, a clothing store or an agent for a Rogue Trader recently returned with a cargo of weapon upgrades fresh from the Malfian sub.



AT THE BARKING SAINT

After the characters have wandered about the middle-hive for a bit, they'll eventually have to make their way to their rendezvous with Orday. The tavern they are looking for is known as the Barking Saint and is located in the centre of the western middle-hive. The Barking Saint isn't difficult to find, though Acolytes asking for directions will receive somewhat noticeably appraising looks that may, correctly, set them to wondering about the tavern's reputation. It lies about an hour's journey from where they first entered the middle-hive. As they approach, read aloud or paraphrase the following description:

Up ahead, through the gloom of the middle-hive thoroughfares, you spy your destination, the tavern known as the Barking Saint. Its entrance is set within the mouth of a massive canine's head that must have once belonged to an immense statue. The head rests at a crooked angle against the shoulders of the supine form of a larger figure carved with the recognisable symbols of the Ecclesiarchy. As you draw near, you see a young boy sitting on a stool before the door.

The boy will inspect the Acolytes as they approach while making notes on an old battered writing pad. The boy, whose name is Silas, says, “Welcome. The Barking Saint observes the rule of first drawn, unworn styles barred. You are so warned.” His voice holds the cadence of a ritual as he intones his greeting. An Acolyte from a hive world will automatically work out what this means. Others will have to make a **Hard (–20) Common Lore (Imperium) Test** to figure it out. Basically, if someone starts a fight, the weapon they choose dictates how far the fight is supposed to go. However, “unworn styles barred” means they can only pick weapons of a sort that their opponent is clearly packing. For example, an aggressor wishes to pick a fight with an Acolyte. He first observes what weapons the PC is carrying—say a bolt pistol and a combat knife. He (wisely) chooses to whip out a simple knife and attacks the Acolyte. The Acolyte is allowed to produce his own knife, or fight back bare handed—but he is not allowed to draw his gun.

This rule applies to everyone that joins in the fight: the first weapon drawn sets the tone,



from cheerful bar fight to full on ballistic combat. The crucial bit is actually, “Ye are so warned”. What that actually means is that if anyone is foolish enough to break the rule of First Drawn, the rest of the establishment can attempt to kill them—and there are no restrictions for what they may use on a rule breaker. This rule exists to facilitate relatively equal meetings between shady individuals of various resources. Many middle hivers cannot afford a gun, but the owner of the Barking Saint (and other, similar establishments) still wants their business. In practice, it means a fair number of dangerous individuals use the Barking Saint as a sort of neutral ground for criminal business in Sibellus—and they make a point of showing up with no overt weapons. The majority of fights in the Barking Saint are fist fights—as those spoiling for trouble know that everybody has fists and they won’t get in serious trouble for choosing a weapon their opponent doesn’t have. The only exception to the rule is scrappers with bionic limbs; they count as having a melee weapon, but if someone is dumb enough to start a fistfight with an augmented fighter, everyone figures that they deserve what’s coming to them.

Acolytes that mention that they don’t know what Silas’s greeting means immediately get his attention, as they are clearly not from Hive Sibellus. He asks seemingly unobtrusive questions while explaining what the rules are. He will promptly sell anything of value that he learns to anyone that ends up asking questions about the Acolytes or their activities. When the Acolytes enter the Saint, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

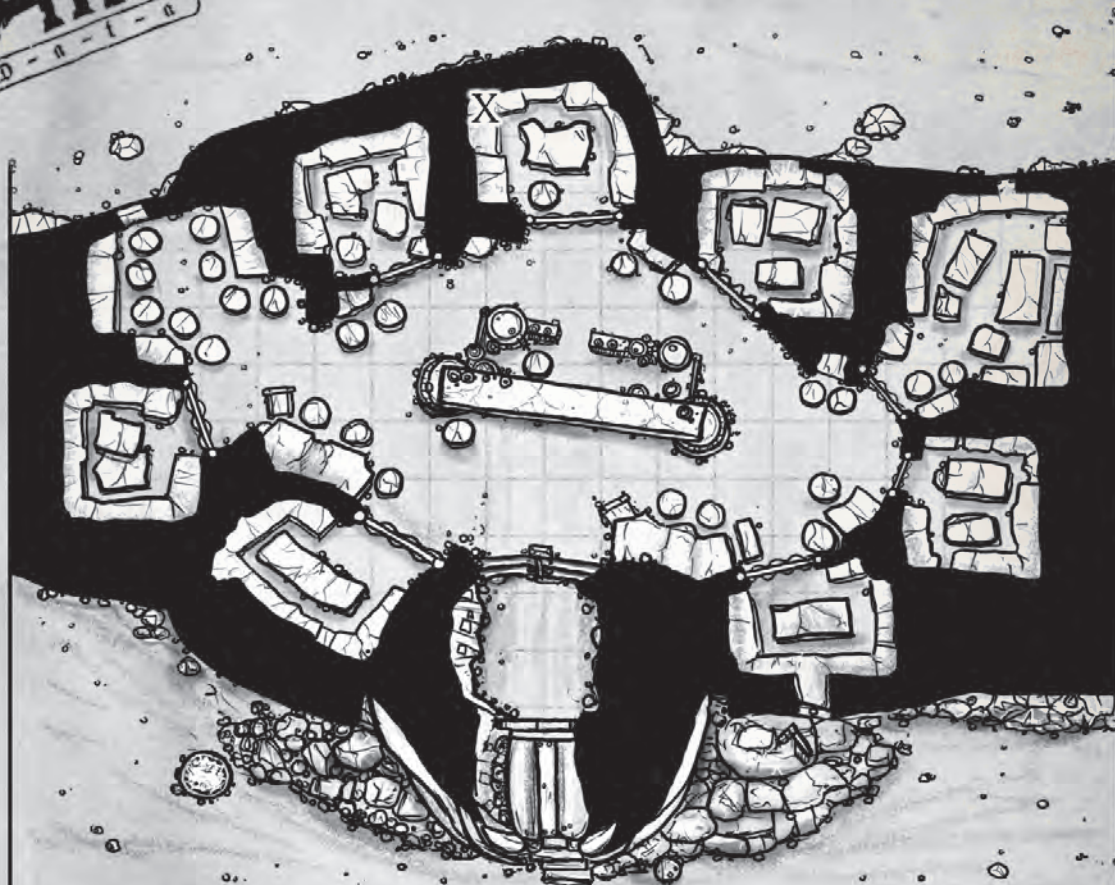
The interior of the Barking Saint is formed from the same as its exterior: fallen masonry. Darkened alcoves of various shapes have been crudely hacked out of the stone or formed from mismatched pieces of marble. There are no tables, just large chunks of various types of stone that serve in their place. The central “bar” is a long piece of granite supported by the chopped off ends of two fluted columns. The bar is currently packed with a motley assortment of hivers and the noisy thrum of conversation. Behind the bar, a large sweaty man is serving drinks.

The man behind the bar is the Barking Saint’s owner (and Silas’s father) Vogel. The Barking Saint is clearly a cosmopolitan and

servation port where they can look out at the heavens over Scintilla or perhaps smell fresh salt-tinged air blowing in from the sea—something many middle hivers will never experience their entire lives. Light is everywhere in the spire; it’s reflected down from the sun and burns in great glass globes lining the walls. The nobles are so used to light that the current fashion trends actually embrace varying degrees of darkness. The players will thus be that much more affected by the jarring contrast when their PCs finally enter the dim reaches of the middle-hive. There, the cramped and dark boulevards are continuously filled with vast hordes of faceless workers who journey over uneven roads built from the stonework of long shattered monuments to dead nobles. The light comes from wan, flickering torches which throw long shadows against an ominously groaning sky of masonry, portions of which threaten to collapse at any moment. And down here, the smell of acrid smoke, old sweat and rancid oil predominate...

Environment sets a tone; describe a few details as best you can and your players’ minds will fill in the rest for you.

THE BARKING SAINT



□ = 1 Metre²

Plan

X = Orday

IMP REC 1002365



145-1/4/CS/H
HIVE SIBELLUS

CARTOPICT 3775555/2836



busy establishment; the Acolytes entrance is barely noticed amidst the bustle of the bar. A **Routine (+20) Awareness Test** will pick up the sickly sweet trace of obscure smoke, wafting from some of the darker, curtained alcoves along the sidewalls. The bar room is full of serious drinkers, mainly Guilders and factoria workers. One corner contains a group of rough looking sorts playing a card game.

Several joy girls work the room, one of whom eyes the Acolytes speculatively as they enter. She sashays over with a smile, "You boys looking for someone?" Her smile broadens if any of the Acolytes asks why she wants to know. "It's my job, sweetness... but it's not companionship you're after, hmm? The old wolf is in the back, third curtain that-a-way."

The curtain she points to is in the rear of the Barking Saint, away from the lights of the taproom. Acolytes pushing back the curtain reveal a grizzled but fit-looking man with greying hair in his late 50s leaning back from a stone table formed from a horizontally cut pillar. One hand holds a mug of ale; a bolt pistol pointed at the head of whoever opened the curtain is in the other. He grins without humour, his teeth are like a lightning flash in the darkness of the alcove as he says, "Looking for someone?" At the mention of his name he asks, "Who sent you?" Once Strophes name is mentioned, he gestures to the booth about him. "Have a seat. Claris is good at sizing people up, but it pays to be cautious, all the same. I'm Orday."

Orday has a very clear agenda for his meeting with the Acolytes. While he is in fact in fear for his life, he is determined to make some money out of his situation. This means selling the data-slate that he knows is valuable even if he is not completely sure what is on it. Of course, like any good businessman he will not just offer it up straight away but would rather make the Acolytes ask after it and try to get the best price he can. Orday thinks the data-slate is probably worth around 1000 Thrones to the right person, although his main interest is getting rid of it quickly.

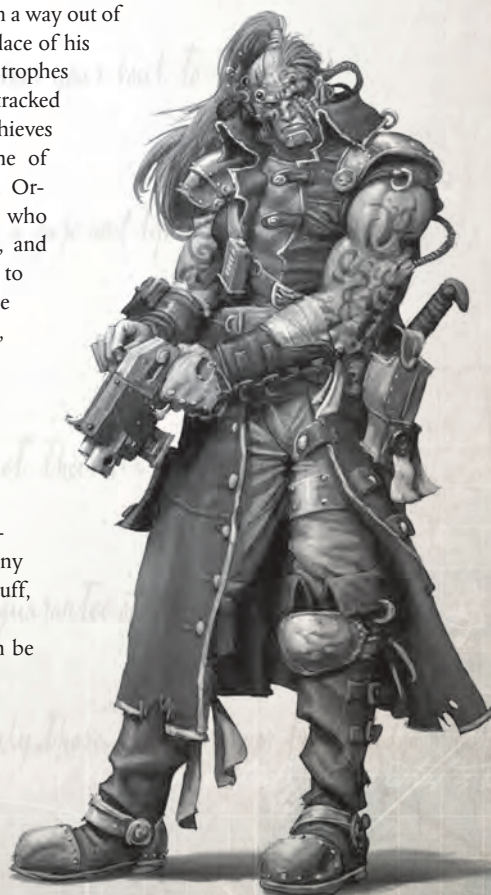
Orday tells the Acolytes right from the beginning of their conversation that whatever job Strophes has offered them they shouldn't take it. The Acolytes will swiftly figure out that Orday believes they're operatives either hired by or soon to be hired by Strophes, an assumption they'll probably let him keep. Orday is clearly troubled by something in regards to the job he did for Strophes, though just as clearly he has no real desire to discuss it. The Acolytes, obviously, will press to hear what he knows and why he's concerned. After enough cajoling, Orday will relate the following:

"All right, you all win, but no saying later on I didn't sound a claxon, eh? 'Sides, Strophes has always paid on time, an unusual trait in nobles. Sadly, vindictiveness among their sort is not similarly rare. A couple of the high and haughty have somehow found out about my acquisition of their little toys along with some data they'd rather I not have. Seems the Joyous Choir has some well-placed allies in the Magistratum. That's not the real problem though. Have any of you heard of farcosia? Nasty stuff. Nasty enough that word is the Arbites are getting interested... It's a potent narcotic and very addictive. I found out that Strophes's niece was hooked on it, though I don't think he knew. I suspect a lot of Choir members are. I think the Joy Boys are distributing it. It's expensive, real expensive, way beyond the means of most down here. But who does the Joyous Choir usually cater to, eh?"

VORLIN ORDAY

Even as a young thug, Orday had a knack for finding people. His skills at both tracking and gunplay eventually earned him a way out of Gunmetal City, the place of his birth. Orday met Strophes years ago when he tracked down a group of thieves who had robbed one of Laurent's collections. Orday is a rough man, who has lived a hard life, and it's very difficult to impress or intimidate him. He realises, however, that this last little job might have angered the "wrong sort". His desire to move on, though, is more due to a well-honed survivor's instinct than any sense of fear. He's gruff, but honest.

Orday's profile can be found on **page 48**.



IMMINENT DEATH AND THE INTRIGUE GENRE

At this point, you are already probably guessing that Orday is going to get brutally killed. So, most likely, do your players—their Acolytes may even suspect it, but they don't know for sure. The mystery isn't in the question, "will the bounty hunter get killed?" but "by whom will he be killed and when?" That's one of the many aspects of the detective genre. It's all right to have a few events that are "predictable" in an adventure as they serve as signifiers, subtle or otherwise, to tell your players what kind of story they're in. That said, it's also a good idea to throw in a red-herring and change-tack every so often and keep the players guessing, too.

ORDAY'S DATA-SLATE

Orday believes that Saia Strophes overdosed on farcosia and either died in one of the Joyous Choir's churches or perhaps during one of their workshops and they got rid of her body and covered the incident up to prevent a scandal.

He knows that the Adeptus Arbiters would not normally care less about any drug, no matter how powerful or illegal, so he has a good idea that the info he has must be very important.

What he thinks he has is an encrypted data-slate that names Magistratum officers who are receiving money from the Choir. While he does indeed have that information, he has something even more valuable.

What he doesn't know is that he also has a list of adept contacts, undercover agents of the Serrated Query and most importantly, (or dangerously depending on your point of view), a listing of potential psykers within the Joyous Choir. He took it along with a harmony meter from a senior counsellor that he waylaid, not realising the full value of what he had until later—in truth he still doesn't because of the encryption.

The Acolytes will doubtless want the data-slate, which Orday will not just give over, but he can be talked into selling for the right price. The Acolytes potentially have very deep pockets due to the Strophes's involvement and the Inquisition accounts that their patron set up for them, making them capable of meeting just about any price that Orday requests. He'll eye them speculatively, but say nothing about his suspicions. He doesn't have it on him (he's way too cautious for that) but he will offer to arrange a meeting three days hence, the day he's leaving Hive Sibellus forever in fact, to turn it over. He indicates that he'll send a time and a place to Strophes. He shakes his head and ruefully grins. *"I hope you all are very good at whatever it is you do."* With this, Orday gets up from the table, gives a casual wave goodbye and swaggers out of the Barking Saint.

At this point you can move onto the next scene. However, this is also a perfect point to throw in a bar fight if you feel the players either need a change of pace or are just itching to roll some dice. Starting a bar fight should be pretty easy, as there are always drunken fools looking to spill their blood. Don't forget, however, the rules of "first drawn". Use the statistics for Scum from **page 344 of DARK HERESY** to represent the brawlers. One for each Acolyte should be plenty. Be careful, though, not to rough any of them up too badly. After all, they will be facing "real" foes soon enough and will need to be fighting fit.

LADY BORELLA'S SOIREE

The day after meeting with Orday, Julia has arranged for the Acolytes to attend a function put on by one of the Joyous Choir's more influential supporters, Lady Tanae Borella. This scene opens with the Acolytes dressed in their new finery as Julia's "noble cousins" and retinue. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The large open courtyard in which you stand rests high in the hive spire. The northern wall of the room is a single massive window that gives a magnificent view of the setting sun and the restless sea that swirls about the granite cliffs below the western reaches of Hive Sibellus. The room is dark, lit by a few evenly spaced candles, the luminous garments of the assembled nobles following the fashion demands of aethyr weaving, and the beverage containers. All present are drinking from spun glass cups formed with intricate whorls. The joliqu-spiked punch has been touched with a trace of phosphorescence, causing each glass to resemble a softly glowing star, soon extinguished by the nobles. Julia Strophes has brought you here to mingle with the some of the high society of Sibellus. Lady Tanae Borella, the sponsor of the party, is a renowned supporter of the Joyous Choir, making this the perfect occasion for your introduction to the local nobility.

Julia, who is having loads of fun, seems to take a certain malicious delight in introducing all the Acolytes under whatever names or identities they have set up. Without Julia's lessons of the last few days, Acolytes without the appropriate background would have been at a penalty to represent themselves well. Due to her efforts, throughout this scene the PCs can make appropriate **Interaction Tests** without any Difficulty modifiers. After describing some of the more interesting individuals present, let each Acolyte state who they are going to "manoeuvre" themselves towards in the hopes of engaging them in conversation or perhaps, avoiding others. All present are relatively minor NPCs except Siprit Daneen (though you certainly shouldn't point this out or make it obvious to your players).

The other notable person at the soiree is Lady Borella herself who, if impressed by the Acolytes, will invite them to the Alabaster Court. If the PCs miss this important lead, have Julia Strophes introduce the Acolytes to Lady Borella.

This scene runs best in “vignette” form meaning you can hop about the room, from Acolyte to Acolyte and play out the different conversations they might find themselves in. The Acolytes should get the feeling that everyone they talk to has an agenda of some sort. No one seems to talk to them just for the sake of making conversation (with the possible exception of Malene Trun). You don’t have to dwell on any of the “less important” conversations for very long, though those can be a lot of fun for players.

NOTABLE GUESTS

SORKAT AUTHWAITE

A rich nobleman with extensive holdings in Gunmetal City, Authwaite is a sturdy looking fellow in his 150s (though he appears to be in his 50s) wearing a gleaming tabard that resembles a nebula. Authwaite actively engages martial looking types in conversation, asking after their weaponry, as he is a true gun aficionado and always like to speak to those who, “*Know their barrels from their backsides.*” Apart from this, however, he has little to offer in the way of information, though he has nothing but praise for House Strophes.

MALENE TRUN

A middle-hiver who was invited by Borella due to her great works for the Joyous Choir, Malene feels out of her depth and does her level best to avoid offending anyone or saying anything foolish. Malene is a pretty woman incapable of affording any of the newest fashions, so she is making due with a shawl lined with small glowlights. She will be very grateful if one of the Acolytes starts up a decent chat without belittling her. Malene knows all the gossip, including who’s supposedly sleeping with whom, shady connections, the lot. An Acolyte talking with Malene can make a **Routine (+20) Interaction Test** of a friendly variety to discover something useful: she let’s slip that a fair number of the younger nobles in the Joyous Choir are hooked on a new drug of some sort. Malene doesn’t know the name “farcosia” though. She can also tell an inquisitive Acolyte a bit about the public face of the Alabaster Court, Caros Shoal’s personal congregation. For more information on the **Alabaster Court** refer to page 31.

LORD RAEPHEN VERENCE

Arguable the most influential person at the party, his appearance is a coup for Borella. Verence is one of the nobles of Marius Hax’s court. He wears a riot of bright colours that flicker in the darkness and is surrounded by a bevy of young ladies that continually laugh at his bad jokes. His features have taken on the amorphously ageless quality that is the mark of anyone who engages in overly frequent rejuvenat treatments. There is a sharp mind lurking under his somewhat dandy appearance, though. Acolytes with a mind to the future may wish to chat with Verence as he does represent a direct connection to the sector commander. While he doesn’t know anything of direct use to the Acolytes’ investigation, he could, at the GMs discretion, be a source of rumours for pretty much anywhere in the sector—providing hints and plot hooks for future adventures.

SIPRIT DANEEN

An individual of somewhat indeterminate gender, Siprit is one of Lady Borella’s hanger’s-on, or so it appears at the moment. Siprit wears a gauzy purple tunic lightly touched with glowing stars that slowly rotate about his neck. A witty and engaging soul, Siprit is always quick with a sly quip and is a delight to those about him. Siprit is also a debased follower of Slaanesh, the Chaos God of forbidden pleasures. Daneen has joined the Joyous Choir to learn more about the various practices that the higher-level members of the cult engage in, with the intention of either exposing a cult that rivals his own, or eventually perverting them all to the worship of Slaanesh if they don’t already do so. Ironically enough, he is here for the same reason the Acolytes are—to work his way into an invitation to the Alabaster Court.

Siprit’s profile can be found on page 48.



LADY TANAE BORELLA

Quite pleased with herself as her party is going so well, Lady Borella is in a fine mood and delighted to meet the, “Pilgrims from distant Fenskworld”. Though Tanae is an older madam of austere appearance, her dress resembles a supernova; she is certainly the brightest light source in the room (not an accident). Impressing Lady Borella is one of the most important feats that any Acolyte could accomplish at the party. Acolytes attempting to do so must take an appropriate **Challenging Interaction Test**, but they need to achieve one or more degrees of success to really get her attention. Borella makes certain that anyone that impresses her is invited to the Alabaster Court the following evening so she can personally introduce him or her to Caros Shoal. *“Oh you really must meet our founder, he’s a delight.”*

COUNSELLOR CORT ABROAG

One of Lady Borella’s guests plays a significant part in the Joyous Choir. Abroag introduces new prospective members to the

Choir’s ranks and helps determine what course of treatments will best suit their needs. He’ll readily discuss various points of dogma with any that care to ask. **See page 31 for more information on the Alabaster Court** and its beliefs. Abroag is unlikely to invite unknown nobles he has just met to participate in the affairs of the Alabaster Court. However, an Acolyte that manages to bring up their “great wealth” in conversation may make a **Routine (+20) Interaction Test** in order to manipulate the Counsellor into revealing some of the Choir’s inner workings by the implication that the Acolyte’s status (money) will result in him being invited into the higher ranks should he choose to join.

After an hour or so, various foodstuffs are brought about, as are a series of small trays with the *“Complements of the Hostess”*. Lady Borella makes a toast bidding everyone, *“Enjoy yourselves, for delight is pleasing to the Emperor.”* The trays all contain little cups with a single dose of farcosia in liquid form. The Acolytes are free to partake or not as they wish—many in the crowd do, though the ones that refrain are in general older. If the Acolytes sensibly ask what is in the cups, they’ll be told it is a local “delicacy”—no one will actually use the name farcosia in reference to it.

Have any psyker Acolyte present make a **Psyniscience Test**. Success indicates something phenomenally disturbing—farcosia has a warp signature. Warp signatures are generated only by living beings, though they can be left on objects due to intense emotions. Indicate clearly to an Acolyte that succeeds at the Test that this is very different—farcosia registers to their psychic senses in a manner reminiscent of a living sentient being, not a warp-touched object. A psyker that has this revelation must successfully make an **Ordinary (+10) Willpower Test**, or start freaking out publicly screaming something along the lines of, *“It’s alive! ALIVE!”* A psyker who fails this Test will also acquire a number of **Insanity Points** equal to their degree of failure (minimum of 1) on the Test. Such an outburst will certainly be noted for future reference—especially by Daneen. Only by leaving the party will the psyker Acolyte be able to calm down. Later exposure to farcosia will not cause any further outbursts, however, the psyker will not take the drug under any circumstances.

The soiree meanders on as such things do, without any particular agenda. The crowd generally agrees that the whole affair was quite a success. When it looks like the Acolytes have talked to pretty much everyone worth talking to, you can move on to the next scene.



FARCOSIA

Farcosia causes an intensely spiritual euphoria in its users that lasts for just under an hour. They tend to afterwards make allusions to the experience of being on farcosia as involving the connectivity of emotions to the world around them, for example, they talk about seeing the connections between others, the threads that hold the galaxy together, etc. Most dismiss this as the “drug talking”. Actually, farcosia does allow a user to “emotionally” glimpse, what can only be called, the more “positive” portions of the immaterium. Farcosia can do this because it is a potent narcotic made mainly from the distilled brains of psykers. Caros Shoal set up the Joyous Choir for the Serrated Query as the means to provide them with the “raw materials” for their phenomenally addictive, and therefore profitable, drug.

After the Acolytes have heard of farcosia from Orday, they’ll probably start turning some of their resources to learning more about it. None of the Lore Skills will be helpful here. Contacting the Inquisition will also be fruitless. However, if any of the PCs have connections or influence with the Adeptus Arbitres their inquiries will be met with a confirmation that several senior Arbitrators have reported that farcosia is being used for ritual purposes by some cults dedicated to the Ruinous Powers. Currently, however, the Arbitres’ eyes have been elsewhere and, up till now, it has gained little attention.

A clever PC may deduce that the “party favour” served at the soiree may be farcosia and all the Acolytes will certainly be suspicious if they have a panicked psyker on their hands. Either way, they may grab a sample for later analysis. Properly testing the drug requires access to a medicae lab or an Adeptus Mechanicus workshop. However, doing either of these things will take more time than the PCs really have. A quicker alternative would be to use the somewhat limited resources of House Strophes to perform an analysis themselves. Acolytes can choose to make a **Very Hard (–30) Chem-Use Test**, a **Difficult (–10) Scholastic Lore (Chymistry) Test** or a **Hard (–20) Trade (Apothecary) Test** to properly examine the sample. Success reveals that a variety of different bio-toxins, several of which originate from other subsectors within the Calixis Sector, have been blended to form a most potent narcotic. One of the bio-toxins, Boraxis, comes from the death world Dusk. The fact that farcosia has such a substance within it should be a big warning flag to the Acolytes: Boraxis is a controlled xenos substance that isn’t allowed off-world. Major black market connections would be required to be involved in such an enterprise. Two degrees of success will also uncover traces of human genetic material within the sample.

An Acolyte taking a dose of farcosia must take a **Easy (+30) Toughness Characteristic Test**. A success allows them shake off the drug’s insidious pleasures, but failure indicates addiction. Each use of farcosia requires another Toughness Test with each dose causing a one step rise in the Test Difficulty. For example, by their fourth dose, the Test is at Challenging Difficulty if they haven’t already succumbed. Those addicted to farcosia constantly obsess about obtaining more of it. They need at least one dose daily, or they suffer a –10 penalty on all Tests. It takes a full detox and 1d5+1 months to shake off addiction to farcosia.

While under the effect of the drug’s euphoria, users will feel they have a greater connection to the universe and everything in it. This has the net effect of raising their Fellowship by 10 while lowering their Willpower by 20 and their Intelligence by 5 as their reason deserts them.

ORDAY’S DEPARTURE

The bounty hunter contacts Strophes the morning of the fourth day since the Acolytes first came to Scintilla, the day after their first exposure to Sibellus’ high society. Presuming that the Acolytes are still interested in his “merchandise”, Orday offers to deliver it to them just past noon in an area of Sibellus’s middle-hive known as the Hustle, an open market district with a wide variety of small shops catering to all sorts of clientele. They are to bring the appropriate funds in a small reinforced case that he’ll swap with them for the data-slate. Only one is to come forward bearing the case, but Orday doesn’t mind if others are present. Strophes notes that Orday seemed particularly on edge but wouldn’t explain why when questioned.

If the Acolytes seem as if they’re going to forego meeting Orday, Strophes politely asks after what Orday is offering. *“If we could break the encryption codes, that information could certainly be of value to me...”* Strophes, however, does not press

the issue with agents of the Inquisition. If they aren’t interested in Orday’s offer, they never hear from him again—nor does anyone else, as he disappears from the Golgenna Reach.

TO THE HUSTLE

The Hustle covers the equivalent of many square blocks within the middle hive. Originally built as a fish market for fresh catches brought up from the sea, the Hustle soon expanded to welcome all sorts of business ventures, legal and otherwise. An abundant variety of booths formed from every material conceivable, from canvas to plastic to plasteel, stretch down multiple streets forming a natural maze, broken occasionally by large bulwarks of crumbled masonry. The Hustle lives up to its name and is constantly in motion; every hour of the day some sort of transaction is always taking place amidst its shadowy streets. The Hustle smells of fish, sweat, obscura, ash, lho-smoke, a variety of spices and more fish.

Orday gives his chosen meeting place as, *“Beneath the broken moon”* which turns out to be somewhat centrally located within the Hustle. A partially broken statue of an Imperial Guardsman bears a sagging shield whose bas-relief heraldry has cracked in half, evenly splitting the crescent

moon depicted on it. Orday, well hidden amidst the stalls, waits until the Acolyte who has been chosen to bring the money is under the shield before emerging from across the plaza, and begins causally strolling towards the PC.

However, Orday never makes it. His head explodes in a shower of viscera and a few rounds smack into his body for good measure. A successful **Hard (-20) Awareness Test** (sight based) will tell a perceptive Acolyte that the shots came from above Orday. What's left of his corpse collapses to the street in a bloody ruin.

ENTER THEODOSIA

Seconds after Orday hits the 'crete, a darkly robed figure plummets down from the ceiling landing next to him. One hand holds a custom matt-black autopistol, the other snatches up Orday's case. His feet have a mechanical shine and are clearly biomechanically augmented. His black robes are split in two, so that his upper torso, including his face, is draped with an overwrapping poncho style garment while his lower limbs wear loose black trousers. Players may doubtless be shouting, "*Initiative!*" and "*I shoot him!*" at this point, but make certain you give them the details before this occurs. The assassin runs away from the Acolytes on augmented double-jointed legs while his arms bend backwards and his neck twists around allowing him to open fire at the Acolytes. Theodosia runs straight towards and up the side of a masonry outcropping without pausing in his firing. His augmented legs and feet smoothly take him straight up the broken statuary as his double-jointed bionic limbs allow him to effortlessly pivot and continue to face backwards towards the Acolytes.

What follows is a running gun battle through the Hustle as Theodosia attempts to escape from the Acolytes with Orday's case containing the compromising knowledge of the Serrated Query's business. On the opening Round of the fight, all of the Acolytes automatically count as being Surprised unless they succeeded at the **Awareness Test** to see where Orday's killer was attacking from, in which case they can act normally on their Initiative. Theodosia, as mentioned above, spends the first Round retreating as fast as his augmented body will carry him while firing potshots to discourage active pursuit.

Catching Theodosia consists of making a series of **Opposed Agility Tests** between the Acolytes and the fleeing assassin. Theodosia's augmentations effectively allow him to take two Full Actions each Round. He may make a Full

Move Action (he would be running if it was not for the dense crowds in the Hustle) while continuing to take ranged Attack Actions with his guns. Theodosia has an Agility Bonus of 5; since he uses a Full Move Action each Round, he consistently moves 10 metres. Acolytes chasing after Theodosia will have to decide at what speed they'll follow him. Remember that characters who **Run or Charge take their Agility Test at a -20 penalty** due to the dense crowd of people filling the Hustle. On the first Round, he starts ten metres away from the PCs. If he ever manages to get thirty metres or more away from the nearest Acolyte in the teeming Hustle, he succeeds in losing the party.

ACOLYTE TACTICS

While Theodosia may well disappear into the crowd in a matter of seconds if the Acolytes don't do anything, there are number options they can use to try and catch him.

Obviously, the Acolytes will end up having to either make a Full Move, Run or Charge to have a decent chance of catching Theodosia—though they can make the decision to stop and shoot, knowing that the next Round he'll likely be gone as the confined nature of the Hustle means that weaponry will be all but useless for long range shots. Particularly powerful weaponry may also be dangerous as there are a large number of bystanders and a stray shot could easily kill an unintended victim. Theodosia will certainly use the crowd to his advantage if the Acolytes start to catch him, diving amidst the middle-hivers to shield himself from the PCs' shots, which causes a -20 penalty to all Ballistic Skill Tests.

It is entirely possible that one or more of the Acolytes may be of the sort that couldn't care less if they hit any bystanders; after all, innocence proves nothing. Acolytes that declare they're simply shooting heedlessly through the Hustle crowd suffer no Ballistic Skill penalty; they must, however, make a successful **Challenging Willpower Test** or gain a number of Corruption Points equal to their degree of failure.

A clever Acolyte, with a flare for the dramatic, may take a Half Action to try the "*Get DOWN!*" gambit on the crowd while brandishing a firearm. On a successful **Hard (-20) Intimidate Test**, or a **Difficult (-10) Command Test** if one of the Acolytes is capable of such a thing, enough of the crowd dives for cover that the Acolyte and any of his fellows within 3 metres can make a single

attack without penalty. Bear in mind that some of Theodosia's attacks (as well as his goons—see page 49) could also benefit from this.

A dead eye shot with a powerful enough weapon may try to shoot the handle off Orday's case. Such a manoeuvre is a **Called Shot with a -30 Target Modifier** due to both the size of the target and its rapid movement. The handle has an effective AP of 4 and will take 12 points of Damage to destroy. Its loss will certainly delay Theodosia for at least a Round or more as he scrambles to recover the case. Likewise, inflicting enough Damage to drop Theodosia to Heavily Wounded will also cause him to drop the case.

One or more Acolytes may think to get to a higher vantage point in order to get a better shot at the fleeing assassin. There are plenty of market stalls that a quick-thinking PC could scale. It takes a Full Action and a successful **Difficult (-10) Agility Test** to scramble to the top of one of the Hustle's booths. The following Round, an Acolyte that climbed successfully can make a single ranged attack without penalty modifiers from the milling crowd. This will only work once due to both range and the fact that once Theodosia has been shot in such a manner, he keeps his head down. Also note that an Acolyte standing up on top of a booth is a bit of a sitting duck, not benefiting from "crowd cover" at all.

THEODOSIA

Theodosia is the heavily augmented liaison between the Joyous Choir and the Serrated Query. He typically favours dressing in a somewhat monk-like fashion with all encompassing dark robes that reveal his sombre drawn face and watery-grey eyes, but give little hint that his bionic modifications are so extensive that they even surpass those of many senior Magi of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Theodosia joined the Serrated Query long ago to escape a life of desperate poverty. He saved one of the high-ranking members of the Query from an assassin's vicious assault and, for his loyalty, his masters rebuilt him. It was Theodosia that picked Caros Shoal to forward his masters' plans and he is rather fond of the little con artist, though he would still kill him with little hesitation if ordered to do so. Shoal's inspired proposal to found the Joyous Choir took him by surprise, but its success has led to him taking an active interest in the doings of the Choir over the years. Theodosia regularly brings shipments of farcosia to Hive Sibellus from the Serrated Query's main production centre of the drug on Ambulon, returning there with a psyker or two in tow. He tells Shoal nothing that he doesn't feel the evangelist needs to hear.

The missing harmony meters wouldn't have caught Theodosia's interest if the data-slate hadn't been taken as well. Even the possibility that the authorities may be onto the truth of the Joyous Choir's purpose has made Theodosia very anxious. He is presently acting to halt or at least minimise the damage as swiftly as possible. If he must, he has the authority to cancel the Serrated Query's entire operation within Hive Sibellus, eliminating any and all "loose-ends" in the process—a step he will take if the incriminating data-slate falls into the Acolytes' hands intact. See page 37 for the details on what exactly that would entail.

Theodosia is a cold and ruthless opponent. His augmentations allow him to fight in completely unorthodox ways, a fact that he long ago learned how to turn to his advantage. His body from just under his heart down is entirely biomechanical and the rest is also heavily shot through with augmentations. Theodosia can go 56 hours without sleeping with no loss of ability. His flexible limbs allow him to contort in inhuman ways and make attacks from unexpected angles.

Profiles for **Theodosia and his hired guns** can be found on pages 48–49.





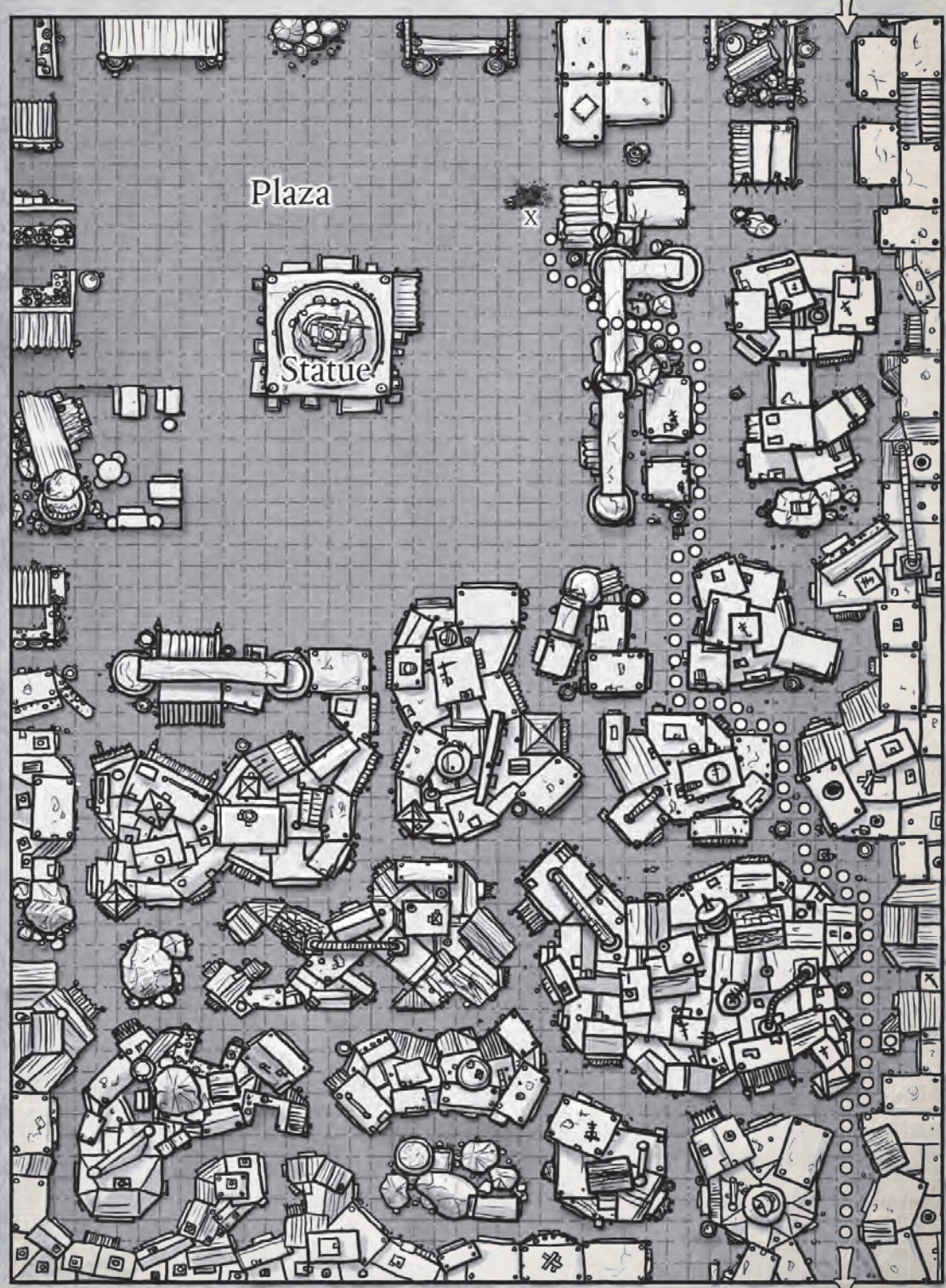
Key

□ = 1 Metre²

X = Theo's Drop Point

○ = Theo's Planned Route

THE HUSTLE



IMP REC 1002366 145-14/CS/H
 HIVE SIBELLUS
 CARTOPICT 34724566654



Past this arrow, either create your own Tactical Map, or loop to the top arrow and reuse this one

THEODOSIA'S TACTICS

Theodosia's sole mission is to get away and he has no intention of staying around to fight. Theodosia has planned his escape well and is not alone. If the Acolytes manage to successfully track his movements for three Rounds or more, a squad of hired guns will come pouring out of the streets of the Hustle to engage the PCs. There is a hired gun for every Acolyte present plus one. Their tactics are not exactly subtle and since they're hardened scum who've been very well paid, they don't care about innocent bystanders in the slightest.

If the Acolytes manage to significantly harm him or actually look like they will be able to catch him, Theodosia throws himself behind cover for a Round, intending to strap a melta bomb to the metal case: while he wants the information on the data-slate, it is far more imperative that others do not have it. Applying and activating the melta bomb takes a second Round. Once activated, he throws the case at the closest pursuing Acolyte and takes off at full speed, swiftly losing himself amidst the shadows of the middle-hive in the third Round. An Acolyte who was close enough, may interrupt Theodosia in the midst of his preparations. If Theodosia manages to successfully strap the melta bomb to the case, the Acolytes have only two Rounds to disarm it, requiring an **Opposed Demolition Test** between the Acolyte and the assassin (roll against Theodosia's Demolition Skill of 52). Failure means that the exploding case must be hurled away before it is destroyed in a blast of heat. A failure by three or more degrees means that the Acolyte attempting to disarm the device counts as having been shot with a meltagun as the bomb goes off in his hands; success disarms the device.

Theodosia has an important part to play later in the adventure, and even though it is very unlikely that the Acolytes will be able to kill Theodosia, it could happen. To this end, you will need to make sure that whatever happens he gets away, or if he is "killed" his body cannot be recovered. The players, however, should not be aware of this (after all, what is the fun in a fight you cannot win?) so make sure to give them a good run for their money. In the end, however, Theodosia should disappear into the crowds to reappear later in the adventure.

ORLAY'S CASE

If the Acolytes manage the fairly difficult task of getting the case away from Theodosia intact, they'll need a key from Orday's body if

they wish to open it without force. The case contains a sophisticated data-slate holding lists of names with a variety of numbers attached to them which appear to be banker's codes of some kind, though none of them have any headings listed that confirm that. They're actually listings of the Serrated Query and Goldenhand accounts for bribe money. An **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use Test** will reveal a large block of files hidden by complex encryption codes. A successful **Challenging Scholastic Knowledge (Cryptology) Test** or a **Difficult (-10) Logic Test** will decipher the code. If the case was destroyed by the melta bomb, a **Very Hard (-30) Tech-Use Test** will scramble enough of the data-slate back together to allow the above Tests. However, increase the Difficulty of all Tests by two steps to reflect the extensive damage to the storage device. The one upside to such an occurrence is that Theodosia believes that the data is destroyed.

The encrypted data holds hundreds of names, many of which the Strophes would recognise as belonging to prominent Sibellus families, along with a series of notations regarding psychic potential. A number of names from less prominent families say "Viable Candidate", whilst twenty-two names, including that of Saia Strophes, say "Processed".

Acolytes with the ability to check with the Adeptus Arbites or have contacts within the Magistratum, can discover that every one of the citizens with a name on the list marked as "Processed" are listed as missing persons. This singular piece of information is enough to bring the full wrath of the Inquisition down on the Joyous Choir if it could be definitively proven that the data-slate came from them. If Theodosia knows that the Acolytes got their hands on the case intact, he will assume the worst and react accordingly.

If they don't recover the data-slate or it was destroyed, don't worry. The Acolytes will still have enough to keep them going. They have now reached the attention of their foes who will soon take steps to end the PCs meddling.

An Acolyte who searches Orday's perforated corpse finds a data-key with codes for a "Goldenhand" account holding several thousand thrones, a magnetic key to the sealed case, a set of travel documents indicating that he was going off-world (though no destination had yet been filed) and an ornate bolt pistol. If the Acolytes don't quickly remove themselves from the area, they'll have to explain their actions to the Magistratum: probably not a position they'll want to be in.

From here the next step, depending on what the Acolytes know, will lead them to the Alabaster Court.



WHAT HAS BEEN DISCERNED SO FAR?

The evening following their encounter with Theodosia is a good point for the Acolytes to take stock of their investigation and consider what they know and what they suspect about the Joyous Choir. They will probably know the following:

- Some elements within the Joyous Choir are involved with or employ very dangerous men.
- Individuals connected with the Joyous Choir have indulged in and are likely selling the potent narcotic farcosia.
- Depending on how successful various aspects of their investigation have been, they may or may not know (or suspect) the following:
- The Joyous Choir is somehow involved in kidnapping psykers.
- Farcosia has supposedly been used in rituals by cults dedicated to the Ruinous Powers.
- Farcosia has a warp signature.
- Farcosia contains bio-toxins and xenos substances from other subsectors—making it extremely expensive, difficult and illegal to produce.
- Farcosia contains traces of human DNA.
- Saia Strophes and other missing persons have been “Processed” whatever that may entail.

Obviously, if they’ve managed to put all these clues together, they also will have developed a terrible insight into where those missing psykers have probably gone...

There has not yet been any direct correlation between the strange xenos tech of the harmony meter and the Tarot card with what the Acolytes have learned. Note also that the name “Serrated Query” has not yet graced the ears of the Acolytes. What they have heard of, though, is the Alabaster Court; Caros Shoal’s personal congregation and centre of all the Joyous Choir’s activities within Hive Sibellus.

While investigating the Alabaster Court is an obvious next step, clever players may try something unexpected, like trying to score some

farcosia, or some other equally clever idea such as contacting the local organised crime elements to see how they feel about this new drug on the market and the people behind it. If it makes sense, go with it as this can be an opportunity to provide the players with some of the clues they may have missed from those mentioned above. The various outlets for farcosia within the Joyous Choir are wary of anyone they don’t know asking questions about their product. Even very forceful persuasion will not get much out of any farcosia dealer other than that they know a guy, who knows a guy who gets them the stuff. However, many of them will name low-ranking members of the Alabaster Court as key contacts for matters related to farcosia. In other words, all the trails eventually lead to one place...



THE ALABASTER COURT

When Shoal first conceived of the Joyous Choir, he decided that there would have to be a series of increasingly exclusive levels of privilege in order to give the nobles that he hoped would one day join his new creed a built-in desire to continue within the faith along with an ongoing feeling of superiority over their fellows. By cloaking the higher levels of purported mystical knowledge in secrecy, he also made them far more appealing to the jaded sybarites of Sibellus's upper classes. The necessities of his "real" mission in preparing psykers for the Serrated Query caused Shoal to modify many of his early plans, eventually leading him to the development of the concept of becoming "True". While keenly aware of the actual purpose behind the majority of the various methods of becoming "True" that his counsellors proscribed, Shoal soon began embracing the many sensual pleasures that his new creed offered, which lead to him founding the Alabaster Court.

The Alabaster Court resides in the mid-tier of one Sibellus's noble hive spires. It takes up just over a third of one hive layer along the western edge of Sibellus, giving more than enough space to project the right cathedral-like atmosphere that Shoal felt was necessary. It has ten meditation chambers, two libraries, a peerless food preparation facility, a variety of advanced entertainment systems including a holovid room, a small gymnasium, over two-dozen well appointed bed chambers along with wildly varying styles of upholstery, an official Bloodsquare (approved by the Magistratum), and one large central area that serves as a church. The central basilica is formed of white marble, the namesake of the whole. Caros Shoal's personal quarters reside within the Court, as do Theodosia's, though he seldom occupies them for long. Shoal is quite adept at understanding the noble mind-set and built the Alabaster Court with their sensibilities in mind. Nothing but the best is served within the Court, no one but "the best" is invited to be there. All members of the Joyous Choir long for an invitation to the Alabaster Court for even a single night; only the richest and most influential have standing invitations. Shoal regularly preaches within the Court, though his sermons are more like

social gatherings where a number of up-and-coming young nobles, along with a few older ones, get to rub elbows and play at being pious. Libations are free flowing at all such ceremonies. The elite regularly visit the Court to attend the various seminars and other activities that their Counsellors have recommended in their quests to become True, all of which cost astronomically more than the same services provided at the other chapels the Joyous Choir has established. However, for those that can regularly afford attendance at the Alabaster Court, money is seldom an issue.

The entrances to the various sections of the Alabaster Court are heavily guarded by a variety of defences, ranging from well-paid Magistratum agents to expensive security systems leased from the Adeptus Mechanicus. Shoal can afford to take no chances: at any given time, up to three burgeoning psykers may be held within a psi-shielded room hidden beneath one of the meditation chambers. Shoal and Theodosia regularly meet with several counsellors, who are "somewhat" aware of the real purpose of the Choir, to discuss various potential candidates for processing. Many of the middle-hivers who suddenly prospered after joining the Joyous Choir did so because the counsellors had detected suitable psychic activity within them or their family with their modified harmony meters, and wished to bring them closer into the fold. Theodosia and his backers trust no one completely: even the most trusted counsellors know only that Theodosia occasionally comes to take away psykers and brings shipments of farcosia with him. Only Shoal knows that Theodosia works for the Serrated Query, a group that he knows little about, and the con man has but recently learned (due to a communiqué indiscretion of Theodosia's last year) that the augmented killer takes the psykers to Ambulon for processing, whatever that entails.

LET'S PARTY

When investigating a cult, however benign, all roads eventually lead to the top. An Acolyte that managed to impress Lady Borella will have gleaned an invitation to the Alabaster Court for the evening the second night after her soiree. The invitation is an ivory placard, inlaid with mother-of-pearl and engraved with a series of Imperial hymns. Very difficult to counterfeit, but not impossible with the right set of skills. Since it is highly unlikely that any of the Acolytes are sufficiently accomplished at scrimshaw to fake it, a successful **Routine (+20) Inquiry Test** will

SLAANESH CULTISTS SURELY!

Reading over this section may lead you (or your players as they experience it) to conclude that the nobles of the Joyous Choir must surely be devoted followers of the Ruinous Powers, doubtless the thralls of the Lord of Perverse Pleasures, Slaanesh. This is not the case. In point of fact, their behaviour is all too common for the nobles of the Calixis Sector, regardless of their religious affiliations. Many of the nobles present at the Alabaster Court are degenerate, corrupt and immoral, placing little value on human life—but they are not (yet) followers of Chaos, a state of affairs that Siprit Daneen and others of his ilk hope to change.

I: REJOICE FOR YOU ARE TRUE



THE ALABASTER COURT



□ = 10x10 Metres

□ = 10x10 Metres



The Alabaster Court
Cross-section of Hive Sibellus
Layer MT/68

The Alabaster Court

Hive Sibellus

East West



Key



145-166/68/71
Hive Sibellus
Cartographer: m3/597/477

I: REJOICE FOR YOU ARE TRUE

locate a tradesman in the Hustle who can. A serious failure or worse on the test locates a tradesman who produces a passable copy... that will be detected as forged at the Alabaster Court. Each invitation allows admittance for one, plus a single guest. Bodyguards are not permitted (unless they happen to be the "guest") within the Alabaster Court.

Julia Strophes has been to the Court once before with Saia and will give the Acolytes a rough sketch of its layout based on her memory of it, which won't be a lot to go on. A stealthy Acolyte may opine that they can slip their way into the court unnoticed. Julia declares such an activity, *"Exceedingly difficult, you'd have to scale down part of the outside of Sibellus... If you could manage it though, once you'd gained entry you'd be all right as they don't check guests within the walls."*

Several of the nicer bedrooms adjoin the north-western wall of the hive and they have balconies or windows that look out to sea. An Acolyte wishing to take the more dangerous route requires a map of Sibellus's exterior, a grapnel, climbing gear, dark garb and a lot of guts. Getting the Acolytes a map is easy for Laurent Strophes, and all of the other equipment required can be found in the Hustle. However, the nobles of Hive Sibellus have a long tradition of being paranoid of thieves. An Acolyte that manages to collect the appropriate gear needs to make a **Difficult (-10) Agility Test** to abseil down the outside of Sibellus. They have a very limited amount of time to reach the Alabaster Court's windows before a Magistratum patrol notices them. If they fail at the Agility Test, they must immediately make a Concealment Test opposed by Magistratum patrol officer's Perception of 35. Success means that they go unnoticed and can try again. Failure means that the officers sound an alarm and then there's no getting in via the outside of the hive, as all present have to flee at once or face capture by the Magistratum (and one or two difficult questions).

If an Acolyte successfully makes it to the outside of the Alabaster Court, they need to make a **Challenging Security Test** to slip inside. Success gets them inside, but triggers a silent alarm that alerts the Joyous Choir's guards that they have an intruder. With one or more degrees of success, the Acolyte notices the alarm in time and disables it, allowing an unnoticed entry into the Court.

Easier by far is the front entrance, but it is not without its difficulties as well. A counterfeit invitation that resulted from a failed Test will not be revealed as such until the last second... On the bright side, desperate Choir members

regularly try to sneak into the court and the offending PCs will just be sent on their way with a condescending shake of the guards' heads. As the Acolytes first enter the court, counsellors scan them all with harmony meters, one of which has been modified to detect psykers. This is only an issue if one or more of the Acolytes is a psyker who is concealing their true nature. The harmony meter detects the psyker causing the counsellor to declare, *"Rejoice Brother (Sister) for you are True!"* This will, however, immediately alert the ever-suspicious Shoal that someone, who bears watching, has just entered the Court.

The Acolytes are ushered into the large central chamber of the Court where a small group of musicians are softly playing Imperial hymns. Read aloud or paraphrase the following once the Acolytes are inside:

The room is lit by hundreds of candles, a few of which are enormous, allowing for the nobles to show off their "star lit" fashions. A stage has been set up within the centre of the court and the Acolytes hear whispers of a grand performance in the offing. If Lady Borella invited one or more of the Acolytes, she soon notices them and glides over with some of her entourage, including Siprit Daneen. She confirms that a popular young noble named Elsergi Krin has apparently arranged for the evening's opening diversion.

The crowd falls silent as a masked figure steps out onto the stage. Cloaked in grey robes, the figure's mask suddenly flickers to life, revealing shifting holographic features that study the crowd with interest. *"Call me Chorus,"* he intones, *"and prepare for a tale of woe."* Thus begins one of the great tragedies in Imperial History, the Fall of Cyperen; a play about the trials of an Imperial commander who is eventually betrayed and slain by the people he governs, primitive citizens that he has desperately tried to protect over the course of several decades. A ragged figure soon staggers out onto the stage. Though dressed in fine clothing, he is clearly dishevelled and emaciated from hunger. Chorus declares, *"Hail Cyperen!"* as the play begins in earnest. What follows is an hour of masked figures coming and going acting around "Cyperen" who appears somewhat lost and out-of-sorts.

Acolytes perceiving that "Cyperen" is acting oddly may make an **Easy (+30) Scrutiny Test** to deduce that the poor man is high on the drug spur.

At the climax, Chorus states, *"What fate is suitable for such a one?"* Before anyone can reply, the clearly frightened Cyperen whispers, *"The Emperor will punish you,"* which hangs in the air several long seconds before Chorus replies, "And your son shall avenge you!" as he impales the man from behind with a power sword. The nobles applaud wildly as the corpse slumps to the stage. Chorus removes his mask, revealing handsome features and a tight smile of perfectly formed diamond teeth, before bowing to the cheering crowd.

The Acolytes have just received their first taste of spurring and a brutal one at that. Characters deriving from feral worlds are unaffected by this display, but other novice Acolytes must make a **Disturbing Fear (Willpower) Test**. In addition to any other effects, failure indicates that disgust, shock or repulsion noticeably slips through on their countenance. Noting such an expression on an Acolyte's face, Lady Borella notes, *"You needn't be concerned, he was just an underhiver."* If any of your players argues that their Acolyte *"would not have been affected by such a display"* or words to that effect—agree, they don't have to take the Test, but give them **one Corruption Point** on the spot.

One or more of the Acolytes may now have a telling choice before them as Elsergi Krin, the man who played Chorus, will have noted any disapproving expressions. He glides through the adoring crowd to stand before his critic—even if more than one Acolyte didn't admire his performance he'll single-out one for his attentions, preferably an able looking one. *"Not to your taste, eh?"* he inquires haughtily. The crowd falls silent to witness how the confrontation between the noble and the Acolyte will play out. The PCs have all been trained well in Sibellus noble etiquette by Julia Strophes; if the Acolyte replies with a comment along the lines of, *"Your play was pathetic. I was reacting to your acting,"* a formal duel ensues. If the Acolyte chooses to be diplomatic, perhaps stating that their reaction was due to the wine or some other such excuse, then the tension immediately defuses with the visibly disappointed noble crowd turning slowly away. If such is the case, Elsergi immediately reverts to a more affable front, cheerfully offering the Acolytes a *"more worthy vintage"* or other pleasantry.

Presuming an Acolyte decides to insult Elsergi, he immediately yells for a duel. *"To the Bloodsquare, at once!"* The surrounding nobles enthusiastically cheer this prospect for entertainment. If the Acolytes made a good

impression on Sorkat Authwaite at Borella's soiree, the old nobleman steps forward declaring, *"I will Second,"* which gets a roar of approval. If not, Siprit Daneen makes another amusing choice for a Second—though if one of the Acolytes is actually a noble, they may wish to act as the Second. The traditional role of the Second is to look out for cheating from the other side and inspect the weapons to be used. The Seconds also typically determine the exact details of the duel and what the stakes are. Whoever the Second is explains that the challenged Acolyte cannot refuse to give Elsergi satisfaction in such a matter, nor can he have a champion stand in since only a minor insult is involved. The Acolyte's Second steps forward to confer with Elsergi's and after a brief consultation, they return saying:

"The duel is to the first wound and will be fought with unpowered blades; neither armour nor shields are allowed. If Elsergi wins, you'll have to apologise and declare his play flawless. If you win, he has to publicly admit to needing more acting lessons or some other such acceptance of your assertion."

First wound means that the pair will fight till one of them reaches the Lightly Wounded level. The two Seconds (and the crowd) enforce the rules by calling for the fight to stop. Historically, over-enthusiastic duellists have occasionally been shot when they refused to stand down, so most nobles immediately comply when their Seconds call for a halt. The Alabaster Court's Bloodsquare sits some three metres beneath floor level, making it appear like a pit and (not accidentally) allowing for the mostly noble onlookers to get a good look at the proceedings. It is, unsurprisingly, square shaped, some ten metres per side. A pair of Joyous Choir counsellors appears with an elegant set of engraved duelling blades that they formally hand off to the duellists. The duellists descend into the pit using rope ladders, which are then withdrawn. The fight begins when a thrown cloth hits the floor of the Bloodsquare and ends with a telling wound. There is nothing in the Bloodsquare pit but the two figures and their blades, so the fight mostly comes down to speed and skill, as is the intention. Elsergi plays to the crowd, flashing his gemstone smile and twirling his blade in order to catch the light. Win or lose, he treats the whole experience as great sport. If the Acolyte takes the wound first, Elsergi immediately stops fighting and steps away, his shining grin flashing. He

graciously accepts the PCs' apology, saying, *"Think nothing of it, we are all at heart, critics."* If the Acolyte triumphs, Elsergi immediately declares, *"Woe to me, now I need both acting and duelling lessons... and perhaps a beautiful nurse!"* to the laughter of the crowd. He doesn't seem to hold a grudge, but neither will he forget the Acolyte that defeated him any time soon.

Clever Acolytes can use the duel as a great diversion, allowing one or more of them the opportunity to investigate the interior of the Alabaster Court as the bulk of the Joyous Choir's staff are watching the fight. Indeed, if any of your players think to create such a distraction for that very reason, award them **25 Experience Points** for cunning at the end of the adventure or gaming session.

A psyker wandering the halls will immediately notice something unusual: his powers feel dampened in an inexplicable manner. A successful **Psyniscience Test** with one degree of success will indicate that the effect is coming from the floors of the halls. Two or more degrees of success allows a psyker to divine that the strongest interference is coming from one of the large corner suites that occupies one of the upper floors of the court. A series of psychic wards have been woven into the floors of the Court, though there is no practical way for an Acolyte to learn that, short of interrogating Shoal or one of his senior Counsellors. A more mundane searcher needs to successfully make a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test** (sight based) to notice a series of paired grooves along the floor that could indicate that one or more bodies have been dragged down the halls. The scratches lead to the same null room that a psyker can sense by its psychic absence. The room is closed and strongly secured against intrusion, though a **Difficult (-10) Security Test** can get it open. The interior superficially resembles all the other bedrooms on the floor, but its looks deceive. The bed easily slides aside, revealing a psi-shielded hatch of some sort. The sealed door is covered with intricate circuitry which a successful **Routine (+20) Awareness Test** will note bears little resemblance to the corrupt xenos circuitry that the Acolytes are seeking. Any psyker present when the door is revealed feels their connection to the warp drain away to nothing almost instantaneously.

The Acolytes are highly unlikely to have the means to get the door open, though if they somehow manage it, the door leads to a series of three small heavily psy-shielded cells, presently unoccupied. If it occurs to any of your players that finding the hidden room seemed

relatively easy, explain that the Alabaster Court is highly difficult to get into. The authorities that would normally concern themselves about such things have all been well paid to turn a blind-eye, and nobody ever expects the near-mythical Inquisition to show up. Thus, the psyker cell room, while hidden, was designed by its builders to be relatively easy to get to in order to ease the danger in transporting fledgling psykers.

Acolytes that make a point of investigating the overall layout of the Choir, perhaps in hopes of finding a place where farcosia might be manufactured, will eventually conclude that such activities are not happening at this site. While the Alabaster Court is fairly large, it doesn't have enough space to effectively hide a production facility of any reasonable size.

ELSERGI KRIN

A charismatic young protégé of the rich noble House Krin, Elsergi is used to having things go his way. He is surprised and genuinely upset if an Acolyte treats the entertainment he conjured up for this evening with disdain. The underhiver's life was, from Elsergi's point of view, quite decently bought and paid for as he'd given a fair sum to the man's relatives, knowing that his chosen "actor" wasn't coming back from the Fall of Cyperen. Elsergi's diamond teeth are in keeping with the Krin affection for having part of their features modified with precious materials.

Elsergi's profile can be found on [page 49](#).



CONVERSATIONS WITH THE CHOIR

After the duel has concluded and the crowd is busy dissecting it blow-by-blow or turning to other matters, Caros Shoal makes his first appearance of the evening. Shoal arrives with several attractive young Counsellors of both genders and proceeds to work the crowd. Easy laughter follows in his wake. If Lady Borella invited one or more of the Acolytes to the party, she retrieves them in order to introduce them to the founder of the Joyous Choir. Shoal appears to be polite and friendly, remarking with raised eyebrows, *"Fenksworld? Whew. That's a long trip. It was worth it though, if you came looking for contentment, 'cause I guarantee you'll find it here."* Despite his affable façade, Shoal seems a little distracted. He keeps looking away into the surrounding Choir members, clearly looking for someone, though he brushes aside any questions about his discomfort. He's actually waiting for Theodosia to return as the last time he saw him, the Serrated Query's liaison had told him that something of serious import had come up and required his immediate attention (Theodosia's contacts had finally found Orday).

Shoal will soon move on and the Acolytes will be left to their own devices. At this point, they may decide to do something a little on the grim side, such as choosing a Counsellor to drag off for interrogation. They may even be bold enough to wish to do so with Shoal, though note that there are a fair number of armed guards in the wings of the Court's main chamber that would make such a confrontation foolhardy. However, if they found the psyker cell, even if they didn't open it, their suspicions will legitimately be in overdrive. There are a number of relatively soundproof bedrooms throughout the Alabaster Court. It will not be that hard for one or more of the Acolytes to seduce a counsellor into talking with them using appropriate Interaction Tests. The counsellors operating the harmony meters at the entrance are called Thiery and Colva. Picking one of them is a good idea as they are both "in the know" about some of the Choir's practices. The rest of the counsellors are, in the main, legitimate followers of Shoal's teachings and know nothing about the more unsavoury practices of their faith. If you need statistics for them, use either the **Cult Initiate** or **Cult Fanatic** profiles from **DARK HERESY** on page 337.

A counsellor lured into one of the soundproofed rooms could, under the right circumstances, be subject to an **Interrogation Test** to reveal what they know. They are aware that the Joyous Choir regularly moves farcosia for another group, whose name they don't know. They also know that the

CAROS SHOAL

Shoal is a smooth talker, but he largely resembles an upright weasel in appearance. He favours white robes with golden highlights as befits his role in the Choir. His knack for setting up successful moneymaking ventures, generally of the dubious variety, has taken him far in life. Unfortunately for Shoal, he's almost too good at parting fools from their money. The success of the Joyous Choir is so great that it is pulling the wrong sort of attention. Caros suspects this and it worries him greatly. His desire to take what he can and run constantly pulls against his love of the good life that he's carved for himself. While not necessarily a "bad" man, Shoal is extremely selfish. The suffering of others, while regrettable, is a small price to pay for his daily luxuries. Theodosia makes Shoal very nervous (with good reason) and he is uncomfortable with what little he knows of the Serrated Query's methods. More of Shoal's history can be found in **Faith is a Potent Narcotic** on page 7.

Caros's profile can be found on page 49.



Choir kidnaps psykers by using special harmony meters to read levels of psychic activity, activity that some of the Choir's practices help stimulate, but not what is done with them. Finally, they know that Theodosia is a liaison for an unnamed other organisation. They don't know much about him other than that he comes and goes regularly by ornithopter, taking psykers with him, that he is a very dangerous man (though they have no idea just how augmented he is) and that Shoal is afraid of him. They can give a basic description of what he looks like, noting that he will probably show up at the Court some time soon. What the Acolytes do with a Counsellor after interrogating him or her is up to them, though if they callously kill them afterwards, give any that directly participated in doing so **one Corruption Point**.

THEODOSIA RETURNS

Theodosia arrives at the Alabaster Court an hour or so before midnight. He may or may not be injured depending on how his fight (if he had one) with the PCs went. He'll have done his level best to conceal any injuries under his voluminous robes though. What he intends to do upon arrival at the Court rests almost entirely on the past actions of the Acolytes. If they managed to acquire Orday's stolen data-slate intact, Theodosia has spent the last few hours explaining to his masters that he is preparing to "clean house and liquidate assets" in Hive Sibellus, i.e. he's going to kill everybody that knows anything of significance and destroy all evidence that may lead to the Serrated Query—tonight, in fact. If the Acolytes didn't retrieve the data-slate or it was destroyed, he is still very curious to find out who the individuals that attacked him are. Obviously, if the Acolytes didn't follow up on Orday's offer, Theodosia knows nothing about them...

Imagine his surprise and immediate suspicion if he sees one or more of them standing in the Alabaster Court upon his arrival. Have any Acolytes that were mingling with the crowd make a **Challenging Awareness Test** to note that a large monk who approached Shoal and immediately drew him aside is casually studying them. If they were present at the fight and Theodosia took more than a flesh wound, two degrees of success on the Test will also note that the monk has an injury in exactly the same place as the black-clad assassin that they fought the other day ... Acolytes that were not present at the fight can make a **Ordinary**

(+10) Scrutiny Test to note that Shoal seems to be somewhat fearful of the large grey-robed monk that just accosted him. A **Routine (+20) Inquiry Test** will reveal the monk's name as Theodosia, an advisor to Shoal.

Theodosia's next actions vary greatly by what the Acolytes do. If they feign ignorance of who he is, he does likewise of them, for the moment. He quietly asks Shoal to find out all he can about them, though. Since Lady Borella is a talker, Theodosia will know inside of an hour that the Acolytes are supposedly from Fenskworld and that they're somehow affiliated with House Strophes. Theodosia's cogitator-laced mind will immediately spit out the name Saia Strophes and his fears will be confirmed—though his first assumption is that the PCs are outside mercenaries hired to find the missing noblewoman, not agents of the Inquisition (that hasn't even slipped into his worst nightmares yet).

If Theodosia recognises the Acolytes and suspects that the data-slate's information is out in the open, he'll wait till the party is over, then immediately eliminate Caros and the Joyous Choir's senior counsellors who "know to much". He'll swiftly set melta charges in a few key areas of the Alabaster Court, mainly the psi-shielded cell room, and arrange to send a mercenary strike team to eliminate House Strophes before leaving Hive Sibellus for good.

If the data-slate was destroyed, but he recognises the Acolytes, he'll still arrange for a strike team to be sent against House Strophes in the early hours of morning. If none of the Acolytes that fought him are present, Theodosia presently has some hired



operatives searching about for information on those who attacked him (or alternately, who Orday intended to sell his information to) and he hauled Shoal aside to tell him that all psyker gathering operations are suspended until he can ascertain who was trying to acquire the data-slate. A **Lip Reading Test** will reveal all that Theodosia is discussing with Shoal.

Regardless of any other factors, Shoal is extremely upset by some of the accusations that Theodosia is levelling at him, including both treachery and incompetence. In a brief silence, Shoal audibly says, *"You can tell them back at Ambulon that I've made them a fortune several times over."* This causes Theodosia to immediately stiffen with unconcealed anger and they swiftly move their discussion behind closed doors. While the Acolytes won't know this at the time, Theodosia will leave Hive Sibellus after this confrontation with Shoal, which, depending on earlier events, may have been a final one.

Now of course, most of the above presumes that your Acolytes are cautious and good at following orders. The second they recognise Theodosia, they may throw caution to the wind, saying, *"Imperial Inquisition! Nobody move!"* or some similarly bold manoeuvre and proceed to start a firefight in the midst of the Alabaster Court. While such a move would indeed surprise Theodosia, his first response would be to put a round through Shoal's head before rapidly fleeing the area, something he excels at. The guards at the Alabaster Court will rapidly stand down if any of the Acolytes have some proof of their authority, such as a rosette to flash, forcing the stunned nobles to comply.

It's also possible that your Acolytes may have entirely managed to cleverly avoid detection. If none of the PCs who fought Theodosia earlier are present, they will have at this point found out nearly everything that the Alabaster Court has to offer without being identified as enemies, allowing them to leave with little incident. They'll likely have also partially fulfilled Inquisitor Vaarak's charge, as they will have some idea what the xenos technology is being used for, though still not from where it comes. That being the case, the following section won't occur as Theodosia will have no idea who the Acolytes (the ones who tried to get the data-slate) are or where to even begin looking for them.

Regardless, the Acolytes will now know where to look next for answers—the mobile city called Ambulon. Let the Acolytes discuss what they've learned for a bit before winding the Joyous Choir party down and moving onto the next scene.

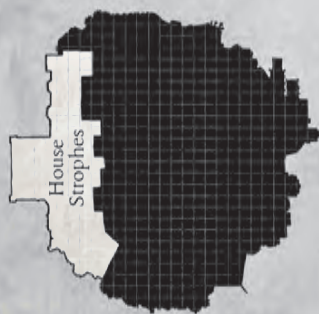
STRIKE AGAINST STROPHES

If Theodosia knows that the Acolytes are connected to House Strophes, he'll send his regards that very night via hired mercenaries and explosive party favours. Despite the Joyous Choir' being in the good graces of the Magistratum, nobody lightly tolerates a Sibellus noble house of the spire being attacked—so the tactics of the force that Theodosia brings with him will be determined by his future plans. If he simply intends to clean up loose ends by eliminating a few House Strophes "agents" who've been getting a little too close for his comfort, his troops will be under orders to get the job done as quickly and quietly as possible. After a stealthy insertion, they're to kill only those individuals that Theodosia has given them descriptions of and then depart, which should send an unmistakably clear signal to House Strophes to let the matter drop. If, however, Theodosia has just slain Shoal and has no intention of returning to Hive Sibellus for several decades, if ever, he believes that House Strophes has information that can compromise his masters and the mercenaries that he sends will come armed for heavy combat, with orders to kill everyone in the house, ending the line of Strophes forever. Regardless of Theodosia's choice of tactics, the Magistratum has been well paid to be elsewhere for the evening.

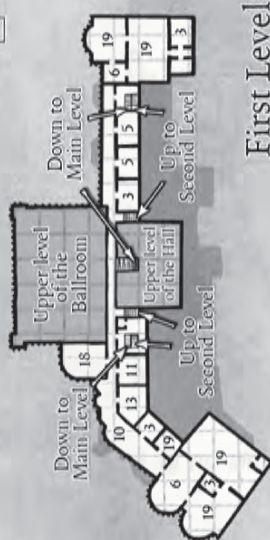
The Acolytes are in for a rough night.

The mercenaries are professionals that have been hired by Theodosia and are not local to Hive Sibellus. They have excellent equipment and operate using methods similar to the Imperial Guard, including constant vox communication between strike team members. Their plan is to set a series of small charges that will cut off all power to House Strophes, allowing them to go in using infra-red goggles. Before entering the house, they'll have used an auspex to scan for life signs so that they have an excellent idea where all the inhabitants within the house are. That, at least, is their plan. Since Theodosia is making them go in quicker than they would like, they haven't had much time to investigate the target in advance, which is to the Acolytes' advantage. Laurent Strophes, being an old Naval man, is a believer in security and fail-safes. He had an old enginseer shipmate run a second





Cross-section of Hive Sibellus
Layer MT/59



First Level



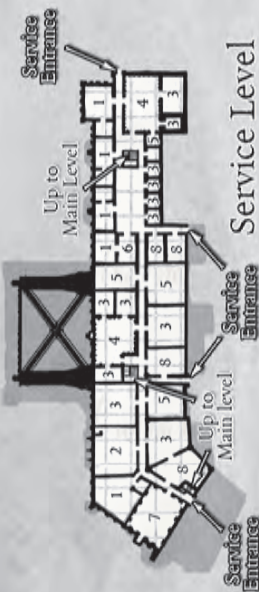
Third Level



Main Level



Second Level



Service Level

—Key—

1	=	Servants' Quarters	11	=	Drawing Room
2	=	Servant Hall	12	=	Dining Room
3	=	Store Room or Larder	13	=	Study or Office
4	=	Kitchen	14	=	Conference Room
5	=	Utility Room	15	=	Hall
6	=	Reception Room	16	=	Library
7	=	Generator Room	17	=	Entrance Hall
8	=	Cloak Room	18	=	Music Room
9	=	Ballroom	19	=	Family Quarters
10	=	Gallery	20	=	Guest Quarters

Imp REC 1002168

145-1/1/CS/H
HIVE SIBELLUS
006/556/0076

CARTOPIC 1006/556/0076

I. REJOICE FOR YOU ARE TRUE

series of power lines so that if the power was cut off from one part of the Hive, House Strophes could still be supplied from another. What that means is that some twenty seconds after the power goes off, it will kick back on, much to the mercenaries' surprise. Strophes also had a series of communication and signal bafflers installed, which leads to the mercenaries getting spotty readings on their auspexes. While they will have a fair idea of how many people are in the house, they will not be able to pin-point their exact locations, meaning they'll enter the house searching as they come.

The mercenaries strike about an hour and a half before first light. Have all the Acolytes present in House Strophes (presumably all of them) make **Difficult (-10) Perception Tests** (hearing). Those that succeed hear a muffled thump (the reinforced front door succumbing to a focused tube-charge). Any Acolyte that failed the Test will have to be forcibly wakened (though any unsilenced gunfire will also do the trick) which will take another



Acolyte a Round to do so. All of the Acolytes are presumably in their bed clothing, or perhaps nothing at all.

There are a number of mercenaries equal to three times the Acolytes' number. You can find their profiles on **page 49**. They are armed with lasguns and combat knives. They come in on the first floor and swiftly fan out, either killing some of the staff or simply knocking them out, depending on their assigned choice of tactics, with half of their number heading up the two staircases that lead to the higher floors. For the first twenty seconds after their entry (four Rounds) they will have a distinct advantage, as they'll be able to see clearly, while it will be near pitch black for everyone else, giving them a +10 Test modifier against anyone who cannot see as well as they. Presuming that the Acolytes don't move to confront them, several of them enter the second floor, where the Acolytes guest rooms are, on the third Round. During the fifth Round, there is a surge of power and the lights kick back on—anyone fighting the mercenaries gets a +10 Test modifier for that Round as the mercenaries' infra-red goggles unexpectedly flare (though they recover swiftly due to glare shielding).

Acolytes that take the fight downstairs to the mercenaries may end up confronting some of them in Laurent Strophes's large study room. In addition to Uncle Thalus in the corner, who a cunning Acolyte may use as a distraction, Strophes's collection may prove to be a useful source of fight props. An Acolyte could chuck the Jokaero light sculpture at the mercenaries, who would likely think it a bizarre weapon of some sort, or perhaps shield himself with the thick text of the Imperial Creed—"The Emperor Protects!"

A quick-thinking Acolyte can draw upon the traditions of Hive Sibellus to catch one or more mercenaries off guard. By choosing a slightly out of the way spot and standing still, the Acolyte can pretend to be an "honoured and preserved" ancestor. An Acolyte attempting this must make an Opposed Willpower versus Awareness Test in order to stand stock-still while the mercenaries inspect him. Failure means that he blinks or moves at the wrong moment, necessitating a dive for cover. Success means that he gets a single Round of attacks with a +30 modifier as one or more mercenaries walks, unknowingly, right past him.

If one or more of the Acolytes is a bit hard-pressed or cut off from the others, help arrives in the form of the Master of the House. One mercenary is vaporised in a spectacular plasma blast as another is suddenly hauled off his feet by his neck. Laurent Strophes inspects the man for a moment before quietly declaring, *"I don't recall inviting you into my home,"* followed by crushing

the mercenary's throat with his augmented arm. Strophes carries an elegant plasma pistol and is shielded with a refractor field. He'll quickly whisper, "Julia's safe, I've sent her and the rest of the staff through a hidden passage on the upper floor. How many are there?" He refuses to retreat and give his home up to, "Blood-soaked butchers who come in the night, without honour."

The mercenaries are expecting resistance, but not much. If more than half of their number are slain or otherwise taken out, the rest will immediately retreat. They came in without identification of any kind, though a number of them have old Imperial Guard tattoos—they come from a variety of different planets throughout the Calixis Sector. Their equipment is all relatively new, but has been methodically stripped of any manufacturing marks that could trace a specific origination point.

Acolytes keen to gain more information may have tried to keep at least one mercenary alive for future interrogation. All of the mercenaries are hard cases, requiring Challenging Interrogation Tests to get any useful information out of them. Some of them are AWOL Imperial Guardsmen, others are just trained scum. An Acolyte that reveals a rosette and informs a mercenary that he has just aided in an attack on members of the Inquisition gets an immediate +10 Test modifier as the mercenary visibly pales. All of the mercenaries can name Theodosia and describe him, though they know very little about him. They know nothing at all about the Joyous Choir; they work for a large mercenary contractor house called Pressure Point.

The morning after the mercenaries visit, the Acolytes will doubtless wish to take stock of their situation and investigation. If Theodosia cleaned house, they'll easily learn that a number of higher-ups within the Joyous Choir were murdered. Otherwise, it's business as usual for the Choir, though Theodosia would have told Shoal to suspend operations for the time being before leaving.

Investigation of Pressure Point will reveal it to be a shady outfit that doesn't ask too many questions of its clients and keeps few useful records on its dealings—which means that they may end up being of use to the Acolytes some day. Various groups within the Imperium, including the Inquisition, have occasionally employed mercenaries from the Pressure Point to fight in diverse hot spots throughout the Calixis Sector. The only useful bit of information that the Acolytes are likely to draw from this avenue of inquiry is this: troops that work for the Pressure Point are pros and do not come cheap. Someone with a great deal of money wished for them to be eliminated.

To Ambulon

With their investigations in Hive Sibellus more or less heavily curtailed, the time has come for the Acolytes to explore some of what they (likely) discovered at the Alabaster Court. Even strangers to Scintilla have heard of the legendary Ambulon, an ancient artefact city, which some in fact refer to as a hive, that prowls over the alkali deserts to the east of Hive Sibellus. More interesting to the Acolytes will be the fact that Ambulon is known to be a place where curious artefacts can be acquired, including unusual xenos technology if one knows where to look...

The morning following the mercenaries' raid, Julia Strophes wishes all the Acolytes a fond farewell, as her father has insisted that she go to their holdings elsewhere for the time being. Neither of the Strophes blames the Acolytes for anything that has occurred. If the Acolytes have discovered what happened to Saia, the Strophes take the news of her "processing" in their stride. Laurent stating only, "You will find those responsible and they will be punished for their heresies, yes?"

After all present have had a chance to speak, Laurent makes an offer to the Acolytes:

"Somehow I suspect that continuing to be nobles of an offshoot of House Strophes won't be to your advantage, especially since the name 'Strophes' has now seemingly come to the ears of these heretics. However, I have some very old and secret ties to a jeweller's family on Ambulon. They've helped me acquire several rare pieces for my collection over the years and their patriarch is an old friend. If you wish to continue undercover, I can give you letters of introduction and papers that claim your group is quietly inspecting various workshops for me as I'm thinking of investing. That will give all of you the ability to wander about the city legitimately, as well as a reason for being there, which is vital when visiting the Ever-Walking City. They toss vagrants over the side..."

If the Acolytes take Strophes up on his offer, he'll suggest that they work up some cover identities while he sets about arranging for an updated location of the eternally moving hive and an ornithopter ride to take them to it once found. After the mercenary attack, the Acolytes may very well have decided that playtime is over—in which case they may choose to go to Ambulon openly as

THE BLATANT WAY

If the Acolytes formally announce themselves as members of the Inquisition on an investigation, the young Magistratum officers manage to look awed, startled and terrified all at once. They offer to cooperate in any way that they can as well as immediately passing the presence of members of the Inquisition up the chain of command, which means that operatives of the Serrated Query hear about the Acolytes' arrival within an hour of their stepping onto Ambulon. The cooperation of Ambulon's law enforcement and the ability to commandeer certain resources, while useful, pales in comparison to the trouble that comes from allowing the Serrated Query to know that members of the Inquisition are about. The rest of this adventure presumes that the Acolytes are going about undercover. If they aren't, the Serrated Query reacts to their presence in one of two ways: they will either vanish, suspending all operations for the time being till the Acolytes grow bored and move on, which makes for a dull conclusion to an adventure... or they prepare an ambush designed to kill the entire party. Assume that Theodosia leads a squad, outnumbering the Acolytes four to one, against them, with the intention of leaving no witnesses. See Impossible Processing for details on the Serrated Query's operatives on Ambulon.

agents of the Inquisition. Obviously, they won't need a reason for being there if they do so, though it will cause serious complications to ensue later on as they will be alerting the wrong parties that the Inquisition is about. Regardless, Strophes will still offer to arrange their trip, seeing it as his final duty as host, and will strongly suggest that they look up his old friend for advice. He also does his best to see that they are re-equipped (using the Inquisition's account) and rearmed for whatever they are to face.

After a day or two of preparation, the Acolytes' last glimpse of Laurent Strophes is through a slanted port window, his augmented arm raised to salute them as their ornithopter lifts off a spire launch pad and heads into the sunrise. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Five hours after you leave the towering spires of Hive Sibellus behind, a staggering sight greets your eyes: a mountain smoothly lumbers over the desert floor below you, leaving a vast trail of fractured earth in its wake. Dozens of long legs slowly lift and fall as the vast beetle-like Ambulon slowly makes its way over the surface of Scintilla. Already ancient when the Imperium first conquered the Calixis Sector, the Adeptus Mechanicus believes Ambulon to be a holy construct, a god-machine on par with their colossal Titans. Ambulon is never at rest and its constant movement dictates the life of every one of its inhabitants. The nobles of the Ever-Walking City live in low-slung elegant buildings along the Spine, where the swaying of Ambulon's gait is least likely to affect them. The industrious worker caste live in crowded tenements that stretch across the vast, shield-like back of the great machine, where they must constantly deal with the threat of hivequakes. All citizens of Ambulon have to justify their presence on the machine, for space is at a premium. Failure to be able to state the function one serves or the industry one is employed in when questioned by Ambulon's authorities results in banishment to the wretched dwellings of the Underbelly; there, the poor live clustered in makeshift settlements slung beneath the Ambulon, whose constant movement continually threatens to send them plummeting to their deaths on the desert below.

Your ornithopter cruises in for a landing on a small platform near the centre rear of the machine-city. Before you've even settled, you can feel a great slow thrumming shuddering through your body as the mechanisms of the machine shake the world about you with its ponderous movement. Welcome to Ambulon.

THE RED-GOLD ROAD

Members of the Magistratum, wearing modified tan vests over their traditional green coats, intercept the Acolytes immediately as they leave the landing platform. If the Acolytes have chosen to accept Laurent Strophes's offer, then their travel documents along with their explanation for their presence are accepted and they're politely directed toward a series of buildings in, "*Quadrant Red-Gold. That would be 'headward' and to the right, sirs.*"

Ambulon smells of dust, machine lubricants and salt. The air is frequently charged with static electricity. Moving along the surface of the Ever-Walking City is an interesting experience. There are no roads, at least not in any conventional sense that the Acolytes would be used to. The only areas of the city that have open courtyards or the equivalent of small alleyways are all along the Spine. The rest of Ambulon's back is basically a solid landscape of buildings constructed in dozens of different styles and materials. The Acolytes will soon find themselves walking along crowded hallways that interconnect the buildings and, in some cases, right through citizen's homes! The Acolytes will find the workers of Ambulon to be erudite, friendly and very, very busy. Even the children all seem to be doing something other than playing, whether polishing small objects, engraving pieces of machinery or carrying small cups of water to others. The Acolytes may take a couple of wrong turns, but helpful citizens will eventually direct them to the Red-Gold Quadrant.

Laurent Strophes's old friend is a talented gem cutter named Kronis Estrun. He resides with his family in their small jeweller's shop within the Red-Gold Quadrant, which is fairly close to the Spine, indicating his wealth. The Estruns cut and set precious jewels brought up from the surface of Scintilla and their family has a long tradition of excellent craftsmanship, which is highly valued on Ambulon. After ascending a short spiralling staircase partially carved into the side of a building, the Acolytes can enter Estrun's small shop, which is filled with ornamental cases, each of which has various gemstones and jewellery pieces on display. A young woman greets the Acolytes and invites them to study the Estrun's wares. Asking after Kronis or handing over their letter of introduction will cause her to call for her boy to, "*Go get grandpa.*"

Kronis Estrun proves to be an aging gentleman, appearing to be in his sixties (he's actually pushing 200) with exceedingly advanced augmented eyes. After a quick scan of Strophes's letter, he'll take the Acolytes into the back of his

shop, indicating to his granddaughter that they're not to be disturbed. Estrun leads the Acolytes into a crowded room filled with machinery for crafting gems and several small workbenches with large magnifying lenses attached to them on swivelling arms.

"My friend Laurent, he says many good things of you in this letter. But what he does not say is even more important. I am in the business of detecting flaws; it is my life's work. Laurent asked me to help you. You have just met me; so the choice is yours, to trust me or not... How can I help you?"

If the Acolytes decide to stick to their cover story for the moment, Estrun gives a small shrug, tells them of a nearby establishment where they can arrange to stay and offers to have one of his many grandchildren guide them about the hive. If they announce who they truly are, he'll be taken aback momentarily whispering, *"Agents of the Throne, in my shop, I never thought that such could be."* Whether they announce they work for the Inquisition or not, Estrun tries to help them to the best of his ability if they trust him with what they're really after, because Strophes asked him to.

Kronis has not heard of the Serrated Query, but he knows of the Joyous Choir. *"Ah, yes, the happy ones. They have a small temple, rearward end of the Spine. I have clients who say good things of them. They seem harmless enough."*

Showing Kronis the schematics for the xenos technology solicits a far more intense reaction than the Acolytes would have expected. Kronis surges forward, his augmented eyes whirring as they focus and refocus on the data-slate. *"Where did you get this? Do you know what this is? I have seen devices with such as this, ancient ones. This is xenogen technology, you know this?"* He'll wait for the Acolytes to answer before saying, *"I cannot tell you what this is, but perhaps the Oracle can enlighten you."*

Any other significant questions regarding the technology or its origins, especially if Kronis knows that the Acolytes are representatives of higher authorities, will be met with the recommendation to seek the Oracle.

EVERY VISION HAS ITS PRICE

Kronis directs the Acolytes to a small dwelling that lies almost directly behind the head of Ambulon, sending one of his grandchildren with them to act as a guide. The Oracle Ocular, according to Kronis, is an engineer who is ancient beyond reckoning. Once a member of the Guild Peripatetica, an association of Tech-priests who maintain and study the machines of Ambulon, Ocular had a vision sent to him by the Omnissiah itself. After his communion with the Machine God, Ocular left his post and reinvented himself as an oracle. At first, the city's authorities considered having him removed, but not only did the members of the Peripatetica immediately declare him holy, his predictions were soon shown to be uncannily accurate. According to Kronis, *"The price for his aid is always uncertain for his ways are indecipherable, but if there is anyone upon Ambulon that can truly help you, it is he."*

Kronis's grandson leads the Acolytes through a progression of fine buildings. A magnificent series of intricate gothic structures soon emerges to the Acolytes' left. If any of them show an interest, the boy waves at the buildings and says, *"The Magnopticon, sirs, the great university of Ambulon."* After twenty minutes of travelling, the characters arrive at an open courtyard sitting in the shadow of the Magnopticon. The open courtyard, already a rare sight on Ambulon, is rarer still for being empty, occupied only by a dark and steaming tunnel mouth; an intricate archway carved like a leering mouth that clearly leads down into the machine-city itself. The boy points solemnly. *"There's your road, sirs. Good luck."*

The tunnel is humid, the floor slick with the residue of oil and the remains of sacred Mechanicus unguents. Flickering electric lamps cast long and uncertain shadows about the passageway, which is just wide enough for two to walk abreast. The base rumble of the machine-city's mechanisms and constant movement is louder here; the tunnel floor shudders with it. After a few minutes of walking, the Acolytes begin to hear a tinkling sound that fills the corridor with strange but pleasant music. As they round a corner, they can see a large room filled with hanging silver chains. Thousands of links of different size and shape make up hundreds of chains that are stretched about the room in what looks to be haphazard patterns. The greatest clusters of chains are draped in front of a doorway. Have the Acolytes all make

THE ORACLE OCULAR

The Oracle's predictions are due to a phenomenal series of data retrieval and analysis subroutines built into a dizzying array of codifiers and logic engines—not a connection to the warp. With such access to information retrieval and layers of inter-related enquiry and study, the Oracle's powers can appear "magical" from the point of view of most citizens of the Imperium, particularly those originating from feral and feudal worlds.

Should a psyker succeed in making a **Psyniscience Test**, he can confirm that there is absolutely no trace of the warp within Ocular.

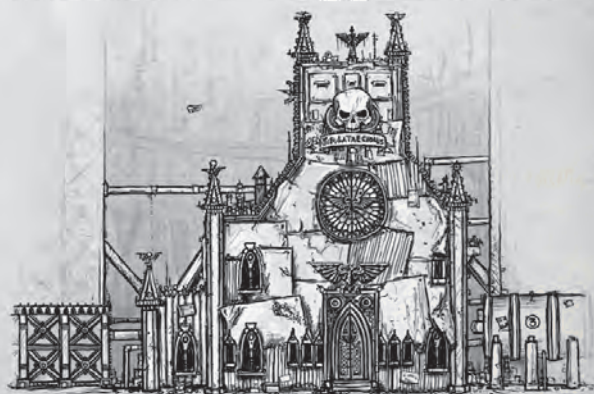
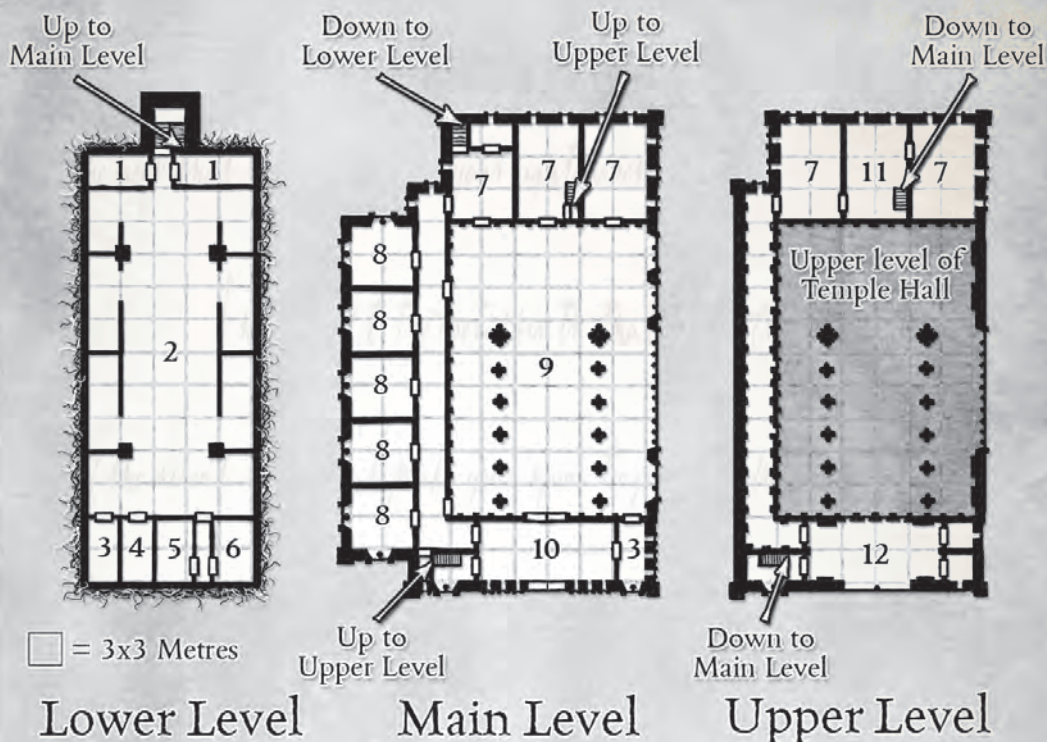
The **Oracle's** profile can be found on **page 49**.

I: REJOICE FOR YOU ARE TRUE





JOYOUS CHOIR'S TEMPLE



Front Elevation

Key

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1 = Workshop | 7 = Office |
| 2 = Laboratory | 8 = Meditation Room |
| 3 = Storeroom | 9 = Temple Hall |
| 4 = Cogitator | 10 = Entrance Hall |
| 5 = Armoury | 11 = Antechamber |
| 6 = Dormitory | 12 = Gallery |

IMP REC 1002369



145-14/CS/H
HIVE AMBULON
CARTOPICT 4552/064/2885

a **Challenging Common Lore (Imperium) Test**. Success means that they, to their shock, realise that the tinkling sounds of the seemingly randomly placed chains are actually playing the famous Imperial hymn, Blessed Is His Wrath, a martial tune frequently associated with the Titan legions of the Adeptus Mechanicus.

Acolytes pushing through the largest chain curtain will step into a strangely shaped room filled with clusters of devices, the majority of which appear to be in various states of disrepair or completely broken. The remains of once sophisticated cogitators lie among data-slates and dozens of other unrecognisable machines. In the centre of the room, on a slung chair made of intricately braided electrical wires, sits a man of indeterminable age. An augmentic servo harness encases his body and a series of bionic data-jacks are connected to several of the machines about the room by long cables plugged into his skull and along his entire spine. The Oracle's eyes shoot open a few moments after the Acolytes enter his domicile: one eye appears to be solid silver; the other is still human, with an amber-coloured iris. *"You have arrived at last. Be welcome, fingers of the left hand."*

If the Acolytes know the reference, they may or may not be surprised of his knowledge that they are agents of the Inquisition. Any Acolyte who asks how he knows this information receive the reply, *"That is not the question you have come to ask us."*

Presumably the Acolytes will ask about the Joyous Choir, the strange xenos technology schematics or about farcosia. The Oracle will say nothing for a time, seemingly staring off vacantly in a quasi-trance. However, the data machines about the room will leap to life, disconcertingly whirring and beeping while the Oracle remains silent. After a minute, Ocular's human eye focuses upon the group.

"There is a price for what you seek. Some knowledge, once learned, cannot be unlearned. The price is your ignorance. You can still walk forth from this place... No, we see you will pay. So be it. This is not xenogen technology... it is human. This circuitry was once incorporated into devices that used or measured aetheric energy in a far more sophisticated fashion than the sacred machines of the Adeptus Mechanicus can presently manage. The circuitry is Adranti, from the days before the Imperium came to the Calixis Sector. We suspect the master of the Serrated Query would find a pleasing irony in having some of his minions use this technology in particular. Like the Adranti, he is not fond of the Imperium."

The Acolytes will doubtless be bursting with questions; here are some likely ones and the Oracle's responses:

Who are the Adranti?

"A people destroyed by Angevin during his Great Crusade well over a thousand years ago. Their empire was centred in the nebula that still bears their name. It stretched far to trailing of here—legend holds that Lord Militant Angevin utterly destroyed them."

What is the Serrated Query?

"An ancient group of cut-throat black marketers, willing to deal in any commodity as long as there is profit to be had. Some whisper that they're in league with the Ruinous Powers. Their symbol resembles a hooked sickle, a question mark formed from a blade."

Just how ancient is the Serrated Query?

"They rose not long after Horus fell."

Who is the master of the Serrated Query?

"He has no name that we've ever heard, but he is called the Faceless One. Rumour holds that the Imperium destroyed his homeworld long, long ago."

Why would someone incorporate this circuitry into an Emperor's Tarot deck?

"To destroy a diviner."

What is the Joyous Choir?

"A front for the questioning mark that cuts, nothing more."

What is farcosia? Where does it come from?

"A drug. We are uncertain."

You said, "like the Adranti." Aren't they all dead?

"That which has fallen can rise again."

How do you know all of this?

"Ambulon whispers to me."

Questions that the Oracle cannot answer are generally answered with an "Unknown." After answering a few questions, the Oracle falls silent. He leans back into his chair, ignoring the Acolytes and closes his eyes. The session is over, apparently—but just before they leave, his eyes shoot open one last time and he gestures into the shadows, "There." Amidst a field of electronic scraps lie plates of armour and other debris. The Oracle indicates one scarred plate and makes a "turn it around" motion with his hand. The back of the plate is inscribed with the symbol of

SERRATED QUERY OPERATIVES

The Serrated Query's troops will fight to the death, as they are well aware what fate awaits them at the hands of any Imperial authorities. If the Acolytes actually manage to take one of them alive, the scum will give them a nasty rictus grin and die on the spot. If the Acolytes have the means or the time to autopsy any of the bodies, they'll find that each one has a very small device surgically concealed behind the jaw, capable of releasing a single dose of a powerfully fatal neurotoxin derived from an eel native to the Calixis Sector agri-world, Spectoris. The Acolytes should be in no doubt that the Serrated Query is a far-reaching and seemingly powerful organisation.

The profiles for the **Serrated Query operatives** can be found on **page 49**.

EXPERIENCE

AWARDS

In addition to any experience awards noted in the text, each Acolyte that survives this adventure should receive 600 xp.

You might also like to award up to an additional 200 xp for good role-playing, such as those players who really got into their undercover role, especially at the social gatherings.

Finally a bonus 200 xp should be awarded to any player who participated in the destruction of Theodosia.

the Serrated Query, it does indeed resemble a sickle formed into a question mark. The Oracle gestures once for the Acolyte to take the plate, closes his eyes and says no more.

ENTER THEODOSIA FINALE

After leaving the Oracle's domicile, Kronis's grandson leads the Acolytes back to his family's store. Kronis has arranged for them to stay in a relatively private establishment nearby named the Overlook, a "student's inn" near the Magnopticon that frequently houses travellers to Ambulon. Kronis also gives them maps of the layout of the buildings over the city's back. The Acolytes may wish to rest for the evening, though one or more may wish to go out for the evening to interact with the locals and ask some questions. Have them make **Interaction Tests** if they wish—but no one that they'll meet is likely to know anything of relevance to their case, other than the location of the local Joyous Choir temple.

After exploring other avenues, the Joyous Choir's temple at the rearward end of the Spine will seem a logical place to look. Considering that this particular temple is almost entirely a front for the Serrated Query's operations from Ambulon, the Acolytes may run into far more than they bargained for. Fortunately, an "old friend" is around to tip them off...

The temple appears to be a basic two-storey affair with a simple construction significant only because the buildings around it don't press it in. The Joyous Choir is very low-key about proselytising on Ambulon. Acolytes who study the temple may make an **Easy (+30) Awareness Test** to notice the comings and goings of a large, gaunt grey-robed monk—Theodosia is either under the impression that the Acolytes have been more or less eliminated by his mercenary strike team, or he doesn't know who they are. Either way, he isn't expecting anyone who knows about his affairs to be about on Ambulon. This will change rapidly though, as he'll hear about the defeat of the mercenaries within another day or two, causing him to ramp-up security.

How the Acolytes have interacted with Theodosia will doubtless colour what they do now. His presence is the give-away that what they're looking for is probably nearby. If the Acolytes prefer stealth, they may decide to wait till Theodosia leaves and investigate the temple after hours. If they have realised that he is the black-clad assassin of Orday, they'll know how dangerous he is and may wish to plan an ambush.

If the Acolytes take Theodosia on, remember his augmentations and play him to the hilt. He shucks off his boots and runs along walls, spinning his body with guns or blades outstretched as he goes. He won't run far this time though as he is responsible for the security of the lab, and won't leave it in anything less than a body bag. If you're a fan of comedic irony and the Acolytes have fought Theodosia enough that they all know one another on sight, you can have Theodosia walk right up to them as they're investigating the temple, thinking them nothing more than Joyous Choir members until he gets close...

IMPOSSIBLE PROCESSING

The Serrated Query's facility is reached by going through one of the back rooms of the temple and heading down a short staircase to a locked room. It takes a **Challenging Security Test** with one degree of success to successfully open the concealed laboratory without setting off any silent alarms. Success opens the doors, but alerts Theodosia and a few other operatives that they have a break-in. The Serrated Query presently has only ten members that work within the facility along with Theodosia. All of them pose as Joyous Choir members from time to time so their frequent visits to the temple do not arouse suspicion. If Theodosia has reason to suspect that something is amiss, he'll bring in some mercenaries for the time being while conferring with his bosses about whether or not the Ambulon facility should be shut down or relocated—though that is a difficult prospect indeed.

The Serrated Query's facility is basically a drug laboratory run by a few loyal operatives and a fair number of menial servitors by tapping into Hive Ambulon's power. It is also impossible according to the laws of Imperium science. As the Acolytes enter the drug factory for the first time, have them all make a **Disturbing Fear Test**—failure on the Test grants **1 Insanity Point** plus a number of points equal to the degrees by which the Test was failed, along with any effects acquired from Shock—see **Table 8-4: The Shock Table** on page 233 of **DARK HERESY**. Success means the Acolyte in question strains to accept an impossibility—the Serrated Query's lab has a vaulted roof some 15 metres high, far higher than it could possibly be, given the space constraints of Ambulon. In fact, the entire factory takes up more space on the inside

than it's outside could ever allow for. The walls are covered by criss-crossing support beams that, when inspected closely, are shown to be completely covered in minute intricate engravings that hurt the eyes to look upon them. An Acolyte capable of making an **Ordinary (+10) Forbidden Lore (Warp) Test** can attempt to do so. Any level of success indicates a thread of understanding, a meaning in the glyphs, speaking of the lies of mere material space. Strangely enough, none of the symbols are associated with the Chaos Powers.

The large central room has a number of wards that block psychic ability engraved along the walls and into the four columns which support the roof. There are a series of small chambers, including one operating theatre within the central room. There, psykers have their skulls sawed open so that significant portions of their brains can be removed in order to serve as the main ingredient in the drug farcosia. Since the Serrated Query abhors the waste of potential profits, the rest of the facility is dedicated to using the psyker's bodies as the basis for servitors or turning the cadavers' parts into commodities to be sold to individuals and races that will pay for such nefarious goods.

The other rooms of the facility consist of a storeroom, which houses various ingredients from other sub-sectors, a cogitator that controls and coordinates the servitors within the facility, a small armoury, a dormitory with a few small bunks—and the main production facility. The production lab has a long line of servitors sitting at various tables, each performing a specific task required for the production of farcosia: sifting grains, slicing up brain matter, mixing chemicals, etc.

As the Acolytes are taking this in, have them all make a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test** (sight). Any level of success means they recognise one of the servitors as having been constructed from the body of Saia Strophes.

Depending on the circumstances by which the Acolytes find the Serrated Query's lab, they may wish to destroy it themselves, or report back to the Inquisition so others can do so. The Serrated Query's tapping of Ambulon's power actually leads to the Acolytes easily getting assistance from the Restless City's authorities if they wish to announce themselves and deal with the problem in a more direct fashion. For further information on the sinister inner workings of the Serrated Query see **Appendix One: The Serrated Query** on page 134.

AFTERMATH

With the finding and reporting (or elimination) of the Serrated Query's lab, the Acolytes will have effectively solved the case. Any Serrated

Query operatives that survive will either promptly die when questioned or will simply be low level hired lackeys who know little about the greater overall structure of their organisation. Depending on the Acolytes' relations with their superior, the Inquisition may or may not acknowledge the existence of the Serrated Query. Vaarak, for example, has heard of them, but doesn't believe that they are a monolithic criminal organisation. Rather, he believes them to be a series of mercantile cells that use the name Serrated Query and the fiction of a "faceless master" as a smokescreen for frightening the superstitious criminal elements of the Calixis Sector. Various cells that he has uncovered in the past have uniformly been involved in highly illegal activities, ranging from the acquisition and distribution of xenos artefacts to slavery. None of which helps to explain the existence of the extra-dimensional drug lab though.

The Inquisition declares farcosia heretical, causing the Adeptus Arbites and the Magistratum to immediately crack down on it and any users they can find. If Theodosia somehow managed to survive his final confrontation with the Acolytes, he may one day return to plague them again. Now, however, the Acolytes have heard of the Serrated Query and of their master, the Faceless One.

The legitimate adherents of the Joyous Choir petition the Ecclesiarchy to acknowledge them as separate from the heretical few who have "stained their good name". If Caros Shoal survives, he escapes with the Arbitrators dogging his steps. Once any connections to the distribution of farcosia are excised, the Joyous Choir is allowed to continue, which opens the way for Siprit Daneen to come into power. The Acolytes may one day find themselves once again investigating the Joyous Choir for entirely different reasons as the cult falls to the worship of the Ruinous Powers.

The Acolytes will probably file away the existence of the Oracle Ocular as a potential future resource. The Strophes are excellent long-term friends and allies, ones that the Acolytes will doubtless rely upon again in the future, which will allow you to one day do something completely horrible to them, making the Acolytes (and their players) yearn for terrible vengeance...



NPCs

In this section, you will find the details for each of the prominent Non Player Characters that have appeared in this scenario.

JULIA STROPHES

Julia Strophes Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	32	27	31	34	31	32	27	43

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 11

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), Common Lore (Imperial Creed) (Int), Common Knowledge (Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag), Inquiry (Fel), Literacy (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (Las, SP), Peer (Nobility).

Armour: None.

Weapons: Compact laspistol (15m; S/-/-; 1d10+1 E; Pen 0; Clip 15; Rld Full; Reliable), knife (3m; 1d5+2 R; Pen 0; Primitive).

Gear: Best quality clothing, spare charge pack for the laspistol, assorted jewellery.

LAURENT STROPHES

Laurent Strophes Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
36	42	32	41	31	34	35	36	48

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 14

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperial Creed) (Int), Common Lore (Imperial Navy) (Int), Common Knowledge (Imperium) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Inquiry (Fel), Literacy (Int), Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Command (Fel) +10, Intimidation (S), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Power), Pistol Training (Las, SP, Plasma), Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP), Air of Authority, Hardy, Iron Discipline, Peer (Nobility), Peer (Imperial Navy).

Armour: Flak gauntlets and carapace breastplate (Arms 2, Body 6).

Weapons: Plasma pistol (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+6 E; Pen 6; Clip 10; Rld 4Full, Recharge, Overheats), power blade (1d10+6 E; Pen 6; Balanced, Power Field).

Gear: Immaculate Navy uniform.

Note: Laurent's prosthetic arm increases his Strength by +20 if used to attack either with a weapon or unarmed.

VORLIN ORDAY

Vorlin Orday Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
43	43	35	35	45	30	33	35	25

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 15

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag), Drive (Ground Vehicle) (Ag), Inquiry (Fel), Interrogation (WP), Intimidate (S) +10, Medicae (Int), Security (Ag), Shadowing (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Tracking (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP), Disarm, Hip Shooting, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Shock), Nerves of Steel, Pistol Training (Bolt, Las, SP), Rapid Reaction.

Armour: Flak jacket (Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3).

Weapons: Bolt pistol (30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Rld Full), hand cannon (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Rld 2Full), shock maul (1d10+3 I; Shocking).

Gear: Rugged clothing, 2 bolt pistol clips, 15 rounds for the hand cannon, photo-visior, respirator, manacles, 15 Thrones.

SIPRIT DANEEN

Siprit Daneen Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	25	30	30	30	35	30	35	35

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Blather (Fel), Carouse (T), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +10, Gamble (Int), Literacy (Int), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (Las, SP).

Armour: None.

Weapons: Knife (3m, 1d5+2 R; Primitive), compact stub automatic (15m, S/3/-; 1d10+2 I; Pen 0; Clip 4; Rld Full).

Gear: Good quality clothes, 33 Thrones.

THEODOSIA

Theodosia Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	41	45	42	52	32	37	44	33

Corruption Points: 9

Insanity Points: 6

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 18

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Concealment (Ag) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Inquiry (Fel), Interrogation (WP), Intimidate (S) +10, Security (Ag) +10, Shadowing (Ag) +10, Silent Move (Ag) +10, Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Tracking (Int), Acrobatics (Ag), Climb (S), Contortionist (Ag) +20, Secret Tongue (Cult) (Int), Forbidden Lore (Serrated Query) (Int), Demolition (Int) +20.

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP), Disarm, Hip Shooting, Melee Weapon Training (Chain, Primitive, Power), Pistol Training (Las, SP), Rapid Reaction, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee), Combat Master, Chem Geld, Leap Up, Ambidextrous.

Traits: Cybernetic Body (adds 5 AP to all locations except Head, immune to Blood Loss), Double-jointed limbs (these twisted mechanical limbs allow him to use all his arms as legs and his legs as arms if need be. This adds +20 to all Climb Tests and

allows him to traverse vertical surfaces as though he is moving on the ground. In addition, he may rotate his body independently of his head and legs, allowing him a 360-degree arc of fire).

Armour: Cybernetic body (Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5).

Weapons: Best quality autopistol with man-stopper bullets (30m; S/—/6; 1d10+2 I; Pen 3; Clip 18; Rld Full), two power blades (1d10+7 E; Pen 6; Balanced, Power Field).

Gear: Robes, 20 man-stopper rounds.

HIRED GUNS

Hired Guns Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
28	35	35	30	30	30	27	25	30

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Intimidate (S), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (SP), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (Las, SP).

Armour: Heavy leathers (Arms 2, Body 2, Legs 2).

Weapons: Knife (3m; 1d5+3 R; Primitive), Stub Automatic (30m; S/3/—; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 9; Rld Full), Pump-Action Shotgun (30m; S/—/—; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 8; Rld 2Full).

Gear: Common clothing, 2 stub automatic clips, 10 shells, 1d5 Thrones each.

ELSERGI KRIN

Elsergi Krin Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	25	30	30	30	35	30	35	35

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 11

Skills: Awareness (Per), Blather (Fel), Carouse (T), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +10, Gamble (Int), Interrogation (WP), Literacy (Int), Sleight of Hand (Ag), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Power, Primitive), Pistol Training (Las, SP), Quick Draw, Peer (Nobility).

Armour: Mesh vest (Body 4).

Weapons: Knife (3m, 1d5+2 R; Primitive), compact laspistol (15, S/—/—; 1d10+1 E; Shots 15; Rld Full; Reliable), sword (1d10+3 R; Pen 0; Balanced, Primitive).

Gear: Good quality clothes, 54 Thrones.

CAROS SHOAL

Caros Shoal Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
20	20	30	30	30	20	30	30	40

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), Charm (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Trade (any one) (Int), Acrobatics (Ag), Gamble (Per).

Talents: None.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Unarmed (1d5; Special).

Gear: Good clothing, deck of cards, 1d10 Thrones each.

MERCENARIES

Mercenaries Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	35	35	35	30	30	35	30	30

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Interrogation (WP), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (SP, Las), Disarm, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (SP), Takedown.

Armour: Guard flak armour (Head 4, Arms 4, Body 4, Legs 4).

Weapons: Lasgun with silencer (100m; S/3/—; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 60; Rld Full, Reliable), knife (3m; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0).

Gear: Uniform, 2 lasgun clips, micro-bead, infra-red goggles.

THE ORACLE OCULAR

The Oracle Ocular Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	25	30	30	30	44	35	35	20

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 9

Skills: Awareness (Per), Chem-Use (Int), Common Lore (Tech) (Int), Common Lore (Machine Cult) (Int), Logic (Int) +10, Scholastic Lore (Archaic) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic, High Gothic) (Int), Secret Tongue (Techno-Cant) (Int) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Binary Chatter, Chem Geld, Electrical Succour, Energy Cache, Gun Blessing, Luminem Charge, Meditation, Melee Weapons Training (Chain, Power, Primitive), Pistol Training (Bolt, Las, Plasma, SP).

Armour: None.

Weapons: None.

Gear: MIU interface, tools, respirator, data-slate, personal cogitator, numerous cybernetic implants.

SERRATED QUERY OPERATIVES

Serrated Query Operative Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
32	37	30	35	30	30	35	30	30

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 12

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Interrogation (WP), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (SP, Las), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (SP), Takedown.

Armour: Mesh combat cloak (Arms 4, Body 4).

Weapons: Autogun with man-stopper rounds (90m; S/3/10; 1d10+3 I; Pen 3; Clip 30; Rld Full), stub automatic with dumdums (30m; S/3/—; 1d10+5 I; Pen 0; Clip 9; Rld Full; AP counts double).

Gear: 2 Autogun clips, micro-bead, respirator, photo-visior.

Be at Peace with

The Joyous Choir!

Greetings citizen, may the many blessings of the God-Emperor be upon you!

Are you Seeking Peace and Contentment?

So many citizens of our mighty Imperium go about their daily lives with despair in their hearts, never finding the inner peace and tranquillity offered by our most benevolent Emperor. We of the Joyous Choir believe that every citizen can be helped to find the everlasting peace the Emperor has prepared for us.

Seek Your Heart's Desire

Do you wish to live without taint and fear? Secure in the knowledge that work and live in a glorious Imperium free from idleness, where all can prosper and rise to great heights, secure in the Emperor's magnificence. By working together we bring harmony to one another's lives and ensure a cheerful and joyous existence for all.

Through the Joyous Choir, you may seek to become 'True'. Being 'True' means that you are on the path to fully understanding and finding your true place within the Imperium of Mankind. The joy that comes from this knowledge and the acceptance of your role, as a productive member of the greatest civilization in the universe, is unlimited.

Your Next Step To Inner Joy

We only want the best for all Imperial citizens. Come to any of our gatherings and see for yourself the inner peace that the Joyous Choir has brought into our member's lives. This can be yours too; the door is open for you.



SHADES ON TWILIGHT

A LEGENDARY BLADE
•
THE HEART OF THE HULK
•
PREPARATIONS
•
FIRST CONTACT
•
SPLINTERS IN THE DARK
•
SOLDEVAN'S TEAM
•
THAT WHICH REMAINS
•
IN THE DARK
•
ACOLYTES, WE ARE LEAVING!
•
NPCs

CHAPTER II: SHADES ON TWILIGHT

"I have travelled the void between worlds where there is only death and malice. I have looked upon sights which mankind cannot comprehend and seen with mine own eyes the foulness that would tear your very soul apart."

— Brother-Sergeant Agamorr of the Ordo Xenos Deathwatch.

Shall I sing to you of ancient ships and the brave warriors that died upon them? Shall I whisper of the many secrets that lie hidden within the great sea of the aethyr, waiting to surface when least expected? The Imperium is beset by many terrors, but there are wonders to be found out in the darkness as well. One category of the galaxy's marvels bears the name "space hulk". Space hulks are the detritus of the warp; derelict ships compacted together along with asteroids and other less identifiable materials by the tides of that strange realm. Hulks range in size from a single abandoned escape pod to vast conglomerations easily out sizing all but the largest gas giants. Some space hulks serve as vessels for Orks or carry a deadly cargo of slumbering Genestealers, others hold much worse...

Space hulks frequently skim in and out of the warp as the result of spatial corruption caused by long exposure to the immaterium, or the weird interplay of still functioning warp engines throughout the hulk's mass. Space hulks are dangerous to visit, as their existence in realspace is tenuous at best, to say nothing of the dangers they frequently hold, for who is to say how a given ship came to be part of a hulk? Was it abandoned and if so why? Do the security systems of an ancient vessel still function? Could plague still survive, waiting to infect others in the holds of an ancient ship? So why risk the perils of a space hulk? In a word: profit. Space hulks often have ancient vessels buried

within them, with artefacts stretching back to the Heresy or even earlier into the Dark Age of Technology itself. The prizes to be wrested from old hulks are frequently worth many risks, as the Adeptus Mechanicus will offer obscene amounts of credits for them. Indeed, while the occurrence is rare, whole ships have occasionally been salvaged, retrofitted and put back into the service of the Emperor.

There is often little time for questions when attempting to salvage from a space hulk, for should a hulk disappear back into the immaterium it is unlikely to resurface in realspace anytime soon, if ever again. When the hulk stands a very real chance of carrying a legendary artefact, there truly is no debate—a space hulk code-named *Twilight* exited the warp on a direct trajectory for the capital of the Calixis Sector approximately 36 hours before impact. The fact that the hulk has exited the immaterium so close to a planetary body is already a cause for wonder and concern—the Imperial Navy would have already done their level best to utterly eradicate the *Twilight* had it not been for a signal coming somewhere from within the hulk's mass which caused the Inquisition to call for an immediate temporary stand down of Battlefleet Calixis. The encoded sign was positively identified by the Bastion Serpentis's codifiers as the signal beacon and call-sign of the legendary Daemonhunter Adorjin.

However, Adorjin has been missing for over six centuries...



A LEGENDARY BLADE

There were once an ancient people known as the Column who lived upon the planet Marguthe in the Solvern System. The Column were crafters, skilled in millennia old methods of artifice and construction now lost to all but the Adeptus Mechanicus—and even the followers of the Omnissiah have never been able to eclipse the Column's mastery of metallurgy. The Column are long gone now and Marguthe is a fire-gutted wasteland. What little remains of the Column exists only in their works—many of which are in the hands of the leaders of the Imperium and grace the trophy halls of the Adeptus Astartes.

The savants agree that the legendary smith Iriactius was the greatest crafter the Column ever produced. In 362.M36 Iriactius brought his finest creation to be blessed by the hand of Sebastian Thor himself as the Ecclesiarch travelled about the Imperium on his grand pilgrimage during the later years of his reign. Thor was well known to be reluctant to consecrate weapons, preferring to bless the warriors that bore them instead. Nevertheless, Iriactius asked to bring his blade forward for the Ecclesiarch's consideration. Such was his fame that this was allowed and, under the watchful eyes of Thor's Space Marine bodyguards, the aging smith slowly unveiled his masterpiece. As the blade came free from the cloth, the famed Imperial historian Quenilis states in his Martial Histories that, "the Ecclesiarch gasped and even the Adeptus Astartes lowered their bolters a fraction in awe." The gleaming sword was intricately engraved with icons of the Emperor and cunningly wrought to hold the light of stars—it shimmered in the darkness of the cathedral in which they stood, throwing back the shadows surrounding the Ecclesiarch's throne. As Iriactius presented the blade, Thor actually rose from his seat to step forward and take up the weapon from the old smith. As he held the shining sword aloft, the Ecclesiarch softly stated, "Behold, the Emperor's wrath made visible, for you shall be a rebuke unto the enemies of mankind. I bless thee thrice. Once for your creator's devoted pains, once for the fierce joy that you have stirred in my heart and once for the great deeds that you will see accomplished. I bless thee thrice and name thee Luminous."

Thus did Sebastian Thor name and sanctify the greatest work of Iriactius, a weapon smith with few equals. In the millennia since its naming, the blade more than lived up to its legendary reputation. From Thor's hands with the blessings of Iriactius, the blade passed to Kether Varn, an Inquisitor of the highest repute who sought to scourge Kadyx Esern, a planet overrun by daemonvessels. Against all odds, Inquisitor Varn was triumphant. When Varn's time in the service of the Emperor's Inquisition drew to a close, he passed the weapon on to a colleague, who in turn put it to great use. Down the centuries the blade has come and none that have borne it have done so lightly. In 723. M39 Lord Inquisitor Esuebior of the Ordo Xenos withstood a ferocious attack by vicious Eldar corsairs, as his investigations into their doings were revealing far more than the xenos were prepared for him to learn. Though greatly injured by their poisoned blades, Esuebior fought on, eventually slaying one of the Eldar's leaders in a vicious fight. Esuebior lengthened the blade's name to Luminous Reproach and so it has remained ever since.

In 139.M41 at the very beginning of Abaddon the Despoiler's Ninth Black Crusade, Inquisitor Adorjin of the Ordo Malleus came into possession of the Luminous Reproach. If her triumphs were ever made commonly known in the Imperium, she would be widely regarded as a saint. As it is, the nature of her work made her famous only in the annals of the Inquisition. Adorjin was a travelling Inquisitor, who fought her way across the Segmentum Solar and eventually deep into the Segmentum Pacificus. Along her journey, she destroyed countless cults and dozens of powerful daemons. Indeed, the annals of the Inquisition state that so frequently did Adorjin battle daemons that a squad of Grey Knights, the Chamber Militant of the Ordo Malleus, was almost permanently assigned to her. In 338. M41 the legendary Daemonhunter passed from all Imperial archives, Inquisitorial or otherwise. Her final communiqué was apparently directed to one of her acolytes. A copy is held within the data-files of the Inquisition, but it states only: "I've found him at last. His reckoning is long overdue. How fitting that it should end near exactly where it began." There is no known explanation for her final enigmatic remark—her confidant died in a hive riot leaving no clues as to what his mistress was referring to.

Adorjin's entire career, her path across the Imperium, was not the rambling wanderings of a vagrant Inquisitor, but a grim and determined quest for vengeance against the entity that had plagued her life and first brought her into the fold of the Inquisition. Adorjin was once a young

ORDO INVOLVEMENT

This is a brief rundown on what the various Ordos know about the situation and their involvement. Some or most of this information may be available to the players depending on who their Inquisitor is and what their relationship is like with him or her.

ORDO XENOS INVOLVEMENT

The Imperial Navy routinely monitors the comings and goings of space hulks. They are occasionally honoured by the presence of Adeptus Astartes or the Inquisition if a particular hulk is noteworthy—and there are more than enough discrepancies about the *Twilight* to make it very interesting. Space hulks hardly ever exit the immaterium within a solar system and certainly not on a collision course for a major planet. This in itself is more than enough to make the Ordo Xenos highly suspicious of alien influence. Several of the ships that comprise the bulk of the *Twilight* are not positively identifiable as human designs, though whether this is due to them actually being xenos vessels or simply distorted in shape by the ghosts of the psykers aboard the hulk is up to you. Regardless, many Ordo Xenos Inquisitors and their acolytes would want to have a look aboard the *Twilight* before it was destroyed.

ORDO MALLEUS INVOLVEMENT

The Ordo Malleus knows far more about Adorjin's disappearance than it has ever been willing to admit. Well aware that Adorjin was going to confront a powerful warp entity, the Daemonhunters have always been uncertain as to her fate as all communication was cut off once her Black Ship entered the warp. Now that a trace of her has finally resurfaced, the Ordo Malleus is absolutely determined to find out whether she succeeded in permanently destroying Nekaybraianon or merely banishing him. They also would like to claim the Luminous Reproach for themselves. More importantly, though, the Ordo Malleus is worried about what other secrets Adorjin's corpse may hold. Adorjin fought alongside squads of Grey Knights many times and some stories claim that she was taken deep into that legendary Chapter's confidence. A team of Acolytes sent by the Ordo Malleus may very well have orders to eliminate any others who have discovered "too much" about the legendary Daemonhunter and her quest for vengeance...

ORDO HERECTICUS INVOLVEMENT

The Ordo Herecticus are also well aware of the Black Ship and Adorjin's last mission. In fact, they may well retain information on the psykers that the Black Ship carried. Whether or not this is the case, they are very interested in any psykers or their remains that may have somehow endured on the *Twilight*, aware that, given such a long time in the warp, such individuals could have developed truly horrifying powers.

and powerful psyker claimed by one of the Black Ships of the Inquisition. Through a series of terrible lapses in the Inquisition's security, a vicious warp entity known as Nekaybraianon had managed to possess the young Adorjin and slip unnoticed within her onto the Black Ship where it used her to commit terrible deeds upon her fellow passengers as they journeyed towards Terra. With the help of Inquisitor Mardaine, who was eventually to become her master, Adorjin eventually managed the near impossible act of will of driving away Nekaybraianon. Mardaine took the young woman as an acolyte and trained her in the ways of the Ordo Malleus until Adorjin was ready to hunt down the entity that had violated her. Her quest took her over two centuries as she followed leads that took her across half the galaxy, but at last, her unflagging pursuit caused her enemy to make a mistake. Nekaybraianon had journeyed in realspace for some time, using the stolen flesh

of psykers as it journeyed from world to world. Feeling Adorjin's swift approach, the daemon took refuge in a young psyker, hoping to slip past the Inquisitor by escaping on a Black Ship. Adorjin had foretold such a possibility within the Emperor's Tarot though and was not fooled. Reinforcing the hexagrammic wards of the ship with pentagrammic wards etched with her own blood, she took passage on the sealed Inquisitorial craft intending, at long last, to confront the entity that had cast its shadow over all the days of her life. Their final battle slew them both; Nekaybraianon's psychic death throws killed the unwilling passengers and the crew of the vessel, leaving it adrift in the warp. The Black Ship that serves as the final resting place of Adorjin and the Luminous Reproach now sits at the heart of a space hulk, occupied by the ghosts of its slain psyker passengers, a space hulk that has but recently exited the immaterium on a collision course for Scintilla...

THE HEART OF THE HULK

Shades On *Twilight* is the “action” adventure of this book and your players’ Acolytes are going to get it in spades. Summoned with little warning from their daily routines, the Acolytes are swiftly brought on board a Naval cruiser and briefed on the nature of their mission by no less a person than Brother-Sergeant Agamorr of the Adeptus Astartes, a member of the renowned Deathwatch Chapter, the militant arm of the Ordo Xenos. A space hulk code named *Twilight* has exited the warp on a direct course for Scintilla. A distress signal identified by the Inquisition as belonging to the Daemonhunter Adorjin, lost for six centuries, has come from the depths of the *Twilight*—the Inquisition feels honour bound to try to determine Adorjin’s fate and recover her legendary artefact blade, the Luminous Reproach, if they can. The Acolytes have just over fifteen hours to determine what happened to Adorjin and flee the *Twilight*, as the Imperial Navy must destroy the space hulk before it enters Scintilla’s atmosphere. Unfortunately, the hulk is proving almost impossible to scout out with scanners as inexplicable spatial phenomena continues to ripple over its surface—meaning the Acolytes will have little idea what they’ll be facing inside. The Acolytes won’t be alone though: Brother-Sergeant Agamorr will be joining them on their quest.

Nothing is ever simple, though, when the Inquisition is involved. Unknown to the Acolytes, a rival Inquisitor has sent his own team aboard in search of Adorjin’s effects. Furthermore, members of the Inquisition are not the only parties interested in what the *Twilight* holds: a strike team of Eldar Corsairs belonging to a group of insidious pirates known

as the Kabal of Crimson Woes are also seeking something of Adorjin’s. Led by a twisted being known as a Haemonculous, the Dark Eldar have brought several packs of vicious hunting creatures from the depths of the warp with them, which will already be roaming the space hulk when the Acolytes arrive. As if this wasn’t enough opposition, the *Twilight* is haunted by many of the shades of the psykers slain during the final stand of Adorjin against the daemon prince Nekaybraianon. Sections of the *Twilight* no longer correspond to the laws of realspace. The Acolytes will have to fight to retain their wits as well as their lives as they journey through the haunted space hulk towards an uncertain prize with the ever-present reality that they are racing against time. In a massive chamber at the very heart of the *Twilight* in the holds of a ruined Black Ship, the Acolytes will at last learn Adorjin’s fate, even as they must fight for their own lives in a final confrontation against the bloodthirsty Kabal of Crimson Woes. Escape will seem all but impossible, but the Emperor protects His own...

ABOARD THE MAGNUS ECTHELION

The events of *Shades on Twilight* should occur after those of *Rejoice For You Are True* but otherwise, they are not designed to happen at any specific time. The emergence of the *Twilight* from the warp can therefore transpire whenever you wish it too. Barring any adventures of your own devising, the space hulk should probably enter the realspace of the Golgenna Reach about two months after your Acolytes eliminated the farcosia drug facility on Ambulon (presuming, of course, that they actually did so). Note that if your Acolyte band have proven themselves to be



TIMELINE

This timeline details the flow of events in this scenario from the Acolytes entering the hulk to its inevitable destruction, measured in hours remaining.

15 hours remaining:

Agamorr and the Acolytes dock with the *Twilight*.

13 hours remaining:

First encounter with the Warp Beasts.

12 hours remaining:

Meeting with first Warp Ghost.

11 hours remaining:

Encounter Dark Eldar scout.

10 hours remaining:

Second encounter with the Warp Beasts.

9 hours remaining:

The Acolytes encounter Soldevan's team and take refuge in the Black Ship.

7 hours remaining:

The Acolytes encounter the rest of the Warp Ghosts and learn of their fate.

2 hours remaining:

The Acolytes gather Adorjin's book and sword and prepare for the Dark Eldar attack.

Zero hour: The Dark Eldar attack during which the bombardment of the *Twilight* begins, at which point the Acolytes (hopefully) make their escape.

travellers, the *Twilight* could easily emerge from the immaterium on course for a different planet, one that the Acolytes have a vested interest in.

The circumstances of the *Twilight's* appearance, along with the signal that the Inquisition intercepts, prompts the Calixian Conclave to take swift and deliberate action. The PCs are a band of Acolytes that have proven themselves to be trustworthy and resourceful, yet still new enough to the Inquisition's service that they remain somewhat expendable, making them the perfect candidates for a dangerous mission onto a space hulk. Inquisitor Vaarak (or whoever the Acolyte's patron is) arranges to have them immediately transported to an Imperial Navy battle cruiser of the Battlefleet Calixis, the Magnus Echthelion, which is in high orbit above Scintilla.

Open the adventure by asking what the Acolytes have been up to since their last mission for the Inquisition and encourage your players to answer however they see fit. If, say, one of them was badly injured at the conclusion of their previous adventure perhaps they've been convalescing, learning to use their new augmented arm or some other such modification. Some of the others may be enjoying themselves, taking a brief vacation while a more work-obsessed sort may be following a lead within one of the hives of Scintilla, investigating a matter for Vaarak or quietly continuing to seek out more information about the Serrated Query. After determining what the Acolytes are all up to, each of them experiences the following scene:

Wherever they happen to be, whatever they happen to be doing, a squad of soldiers wearing full suits of black carapace armour approach them. As the figures draw near, the Acolytes will note that they appear to be Inquisitorial storm troopers, for they are all openly displaying the Inquisition's rosette on their shoulders in crimson, causing awed and frightened citizens to swiftly dive out of their path. As the storm troopers reach the Acolytes, an individual dressed in one of the traditional long coat uniforms of the Imperial Navy steps forward. "*Sir (Madame) you are called. You are to come with us at once.*" The individual's manner will not be threatening, merely insistent. If the Acolytes protest, or note that they need to retrieve some of their possessions, the Naval liaison simply responds, "*Time is of the essence, Sir. I have orders to retrieve you as swiftly as possible. All of your effects will be sent on after you.*" In reply to the Acolytes asking where they are being taken and why, the liaison's reply is, "*I have orders to bring you to the Magnus Echthelion, in high orbit.*"

I am not authorised to know why only that it must be done without delay by order of the Inquisition. They are here to ensure your safe arrival." While the storm troopers will allow the Acolytes to dress, they otherwise expect the Acolytes to leave with them immediately.

The Acolytes are all swiftly transported via one or more naval transfer landers to rendezvous with an Imperial Dominator Class Cruiser, the Magnus Echthelion. For anyone that has never seen an Imperial ship of the line up close, the cruiser is an impressive sight. Barely less than a kilometre in length, it is armed with a massive series of laser cannon batteries that stretch more than half the span of its hull to both port and starboard. The forward prow of the ship has been shaped to resemble a magnificent armoured warrior, its raised sword the barrel of a massive nova cannon. The landers are but small insects when compared against the great ship and they easily disappear into its vast hanger bays as they smoothly touch down for their landings. The Acolytes are reunited, if they were apart, and swiftly led down a series of corridors past armoured naval guards. They are continually treated with deference, but hustled all the same. Any Acolyte with military experience will note that the ship seems to be on high alert, as if preparing for an engagement. After several minutes of walking down the length of the massive vessel, they are finally deposited in a large and lavishly appointed ready room. One of their naval liaisons notes: "*The Captain will make his presence felt shortly. I will have refreshments brought at once.*" Even the most uninformed Acolyte will know this announcement to be a statement of significance—Imperial Naval captains do not routinely speak to passengers on their ships, much less ones more or less dragged aboard at gunpoint.

An aide soon brings in a small trolley with glasses and various refreshments on it; he silently salutes the Acolytes and departs. Let the players talk in character for a while, allowing them to discuss what they think might be going on. After a few minutes, a small chime sounds and a spherical device slowly lowers into the centre of the room from the ceiling. There is an electrostatic flicker, a smell of ozone in the air, and a hologram of a man's upper torso appears above the sphere. The figure has some sort of bionic filter over his mouth, while his skin is covered in fine circuitry that extends into an elegant augmentic skullcap that flares up behind him, presumably leading to mechanisms invisible to the holographic projector. He sweeps the assembled Acolytes with his gaze, before his voice, deep and ringing with the tones of ritual cadence, sounds within the room. He introduces himself:

"Greetings. I am Captain Sepheyr, master of the Magnus Ecthelion. I am to convey your lord's greetings and his apologies for being unable to be here with you, but the urgency of the mission that now stands before you allows for no delay. Here now, I display his key unto you all that you may know I speak the truth."

Data-slates emerge on servo-arms from the underside of the sphere, each one of which shows a series of engramic codes unique to Inquisitor Vaarak along with the Seal of the Inquisition. *"Are you satisfied with this proof?"* Captain Sepheyr waits for the Acolytes to all answer in the affirmative. A Test is not required to know that no Imperium agency would dare counterfeit the Seal of the Inquisition. If the Acolytes' patron is aware that one or more of them are of the surly suspicious type then a further proof that would convince them, something only they and Vaarak would know, has been added to their data-slate.

With that resolved, one large wall of the room shimmers and reveals itself to be a large view screen. What at first appears to be a great dark ship appears on the screen, but that impression is swiftly given the lie by the strange contours of the vessel, which seem to be interlaced with rock. It soon becomes clear that the object is, in fact, a conglomeration of multiple ships of varying styles, not all of which are readily identifiable as Imperial. As the Acolytes watch, small portions of the object seem to flicker and slowly fade, briefly showing the stars behind it as its hull turns translucent. Captain Sepheyr indicates that they are looking at a space hulk that has recently exited the immaterium within system on a direct course for Scintilla. Acolytes with the **Scholastic Lore (Astronomy)** skill or comparative knowledge of space will automatically know that this is unprecedented. Space hulks invariably enter realspace outside of solar systems. Before anyone can comment, though, the captain falls silent and his eyes take on a faraway look.

"Gentlemen, it is my honour to introduce you to the individual who will be briefing you fully on what this portends and what will be expected of you."

The largest door within the room opens, but it is not enough. Not nearly enough. The massive figure that stoops to enter barely fits through the door frame, even while crouching. Glossy black power armour encases a warrior standing nearly two-and-a-half metres tall. In the crook of one arm, he holds a helmet. At his side

there is an ancient bolt pistol. As he rises to his full height, he surveys you all with appraising gun metal-grey eyes. By all that is holy, an Adeptus Astartes—one of the chosen warriors of the God-Emperor! A Space Marine!

"Acolytes," intones Captain Sepheyr, "I present to you Brother-Sergeant Agamorr of the Ordo Xenos Deathwatch. To him falls the duty of explaining your mission."

Brother-Sergeant Agamorr nods to the Captain's hologram and each of you in turn. Before he speaks, Agamorr reverently places his helmet down and draws a control wand from a block of instrumentation on the hologramatic sphere. When he finally speaks, Brother-Sergeant Agamorr's voice reverberates from deep within his massive chest:

"Thank you, Captain. Gentlemen. Approximately three days ago, a cadre of sanctioned Inquisitorial psykers registered an unusually strong disturbance of the aethyr about the Golgenna Reach. We were unable to verify what their senses were detecting until naval telemetry confirmed the emergence of a space hulk which we have code-named, 'Twilight'. The Twilight has entered realspace on a trajectory that will take it directly into Scintilla's upper atmosphere in a little over half a sidereal day. While there is no standard procedure for an incident like this, the recommended course of action when dealing with a hulk that is too near a planetary system is to eliminate it, which is exactly what Battlefleet Calixis was preparing to do. However, soon after its detection, a transponder signal emerged from the heart of this hulk, an encoded signal that the codifiers of the Inquisition have identified as carrying the call sign of the legendary Inquisitor Adorjin. Adorjin has been missing for over six centuries, her fate unknown. The signal has repeated twice since, at odd intervals. The dense material of the Twilight in conjunction with the unusual spatial anomalies that you can clearly see on the view screen has made an exact sensor reading of the interior of the hulk impossible. Correspondingly, the Inquisition has ordered the Battlefleet Calixis to give their agents as much time as possible to determine Adorjin's fate and retrieve the holy weapon that she once carried, the Luminous Reproach. Which brings us to you. You have been granted the honour of entering the Twilight. You have just over fifteen hours to determine the source of the signal, secure the blade if possible and depart before the Navy destroys the hulk."

BROTHER-SERGEANT AGAMORR



One of the near mythical augmented warriors of the Imperium, Agamorr is just short of two centuries in age, though the few beings he meets without his helmet on would never guess this by his appearance alone. Agamorr has served in the Deathwatch for just over three decades; his standard original ten-year tour of duty was extended when it was discovered that he had a knack for eliminating unusual xenofoms. Agamorr's black power armour is clearly ancient with carefully maintained ornately inlaid plates. One of his shoulder plates

bears the cyberskull cog of the Ordo Xenos Deathwatch; the other is marked with a pair of ornate crossed thunderhammers, the symbol of his Chapter. When preparing to board the *Twilight*, he adds an ancient well-worn thunderhammer to the bolt pistol that he carries at his side. Agamorr is straightforward in both his words and deeds. He seldom hesitates once he's chosen a course of action and his speech is often directly to the point. Agamorr respects the Acolytes' wishes and, to a limited extent, is willing to follow their orders, as he deems them to be representatives of the Inquisition. However, in combat situations, the Brother-Sergeant expects to be fully obeyed. He feels no fear—the emotion is, to Agamorr, like a distantly remembered dream of childhood.

You may be concerned that the presence of a Space Marine could overshadow your PCs, but not to worry, the Acolytes are still the protagonists of the adventure. Brother-Sergeant Agamorr has his part to play and in suitably dramatic action hero style, he'll eventually exit the stage—leaving your Acolytes to soldier on without him. In the meantime, keep a sharp look out for the gleam in your players' eyes when they realise that they are in command of the Brother-Sergeant, not the other way around.

Agamorr's profile can be found on page 86.

The Space Marine finishes his speech and looks about the room expectantly, one eyebrow slightly raised in a comfortingly human gesture. Captain Sepheyr notes that the Navy will not be able to delay the hulk's destruction—as much time as possible has already been given for the mission, hence the continual hurrying that the Acolytes have experienced. Agamorr pauses for an instant then states, *"I was given to understand by your master that you hold your positions by choice. He does not order you to do this, he asks. What say you? Will you accept this burden?"* Agamorr lets the Acolytes answer. Obviously if one or more of them says no, the adventure ends pretty quickly for them (Inquisitor Vaarak will definitely have some "interesting" thoughts on their on-going membership of his retinue too). Presuming they all have the right "spirit" though, they'll agree to the mission. Brother-Sergeant Agamorr nods once, decisively. *"I will not standby as you walk into the dark alone. I will go with you."*

The fact that Agamorr noted Adorjin as being "legendary" may strike some of the Acolytes as odd. No Acolytes without a useful **Scholastic or Forbidden Lore** have any idea who Adorjin is or what she's done. A character successfully making a **Difficult (–10) Scholastic Lore (Legend) Test** will recall an Inquisitor Adorjin as being responsible for eliminating a recidivist cult within the Golgenna Reach many centuries ago. Acolytes with access to **Forbidden Lore (Ordo Malleus) or Forbidden Lore (The Inquisition)** can make an appropriate **Forbidden Lore Test** to know that Adorjin was a famed Daemonhunter of the Ordo Malleus who disappeared some six centuries ago. The Inquisition at large is unaware of the circumstances of Adorjin's last journey—but Brother-Sergeant Agamorr passes around a transcript of her final enigmatic message, logged before she disappeared:

"I've found him at last. His reckoning is long overdue. How fitting that it should end near exactly where it began."

Neither the Brother-Sergeant nor anyone else present knows who Adorjin is referring to, or what her final comment refers to. Questions to the Brother-Sergeant on that account will bring a shake of his head and the comment, *"We don't know. Inquisitors of her stature tend to have many enemies."*

PREPARATIONS

Brother-Sergeant Agamorr leads the Acolytes through the ship (which causes a wave of awed Naval personnel to stand aside), down into one of the forward holds of the Magnus Ecthelion where they are all swiftly readied for their mission. The hold is a crowded affair, full of busily hustling ratings carefully preparing the cruiser's weapons for the eventual destruction of the *Twilight*.

The Imperial Navy has arranged such equipment as they believe the Acolytes should require including full vac-suits for all of them with magnetically chargeable boots, as gravity

is likely to be non-existent in much of the space hulk. Acolytes who have never used void-suits before, which are likely to be the majority of them without military backgrounds, get a crash course in "safe void-suit operation" from one of their naval liaisons, for example, *"The amber rune signifies the presence of air and the ability to breathe, the red rune means the void holds sway and you must keep your helmet sealed, relying on the purified air of your tanks."*

A full array of equipment, from auspexes to micro-beads is available, as well as an advanced vox-caster that the naval engineers hope will be able to cut through the distortion fields surrounding the space hulk. Any standard weaponry that the Acolytes could want, within reason, is also at hand, though Agamorr notes that combat upon a space hulk is invariably at close quarters, rendering heavy weapons near useless at best and exceedingly dangerous at worst.

While the void-suits have integral lights built into their helmets and shoulders, which can be deactivated as necessary, there are also a series of hand-held electric torches to help illuminate the hulk's interior. Finally, there are a series of already coordinated chronos that are counting down to the moment the battlefleet must destroy the space hulk. The Imperial Navy has a number of pict records of the *Twilight*, including one that has been superimposed by a series of coordinate

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH THE ASTARTES

How often in life does one get to meet a living legend?

It is highly likely that your players, as well as their characters, will want to question Brother-Sergeant Agamorr as much as they can without appearing rude before they actually enter the space hulk. Since the shuttle ride to the *Twilight* will take approximately thirty minutes, they will have the time. The following are some of the questions they may end up asking and the Brother-Sergeant's possible responses:

How did you come to be in the Deathwatch? Or, What Chapter do you belong to?

"I am a full battle brother of the Hammers of Retribution. I was seconded to the Deathwatch for a ten-year tour of duty some thirty years ago. The Inquisition and my brothers decided that I had an affinity for this task, so my time with the Deathwatch has been extended indefinitely."

Where is your Chapter based?

"I'm not at liberty to say."

Where is the rest of your squad?

"Scattered throughout Calixis. For this task, one warrior should suffice."

What is the Luminous Reproach?

"It is the final masterpiece of the weapon smith, Iriactius. A sacred blade blessed by the hand of Ecclesiarch Sebastian Thor himself in the latter days of his great pilgrimage. Legend attributes it with immense power against the daemonic. Adorjin was the last in a long line of famous bearers."

Have you ever heard of the Serrated Query?

[This brings a sharp look from Agamorr.] *"Aye. A ruthless band of war profiteers dealing in black market goods. They regularly employ xenos-scum mercenaries, which is how I first encountered them. My squad and I once tracked what we suspected were a band of xenos cultists, but before we could catch them, the Serrated Query eliminated their group. Further investigation proved that several of them were, in fact, members of that fraternity. They killed their own men."*

vectors—effectively, the best guesses of the Imperial savants as to where Adorjin's signal might have originated from within the hulk's mass—which appears to be close to the centre of the space hulk. See **Player Handout 2.1: Map of the Twilight**.

The Inquisition savants estimate that it will take approximately five hours to get to the centre of the space hulk, assuming that a way can actually be found which isn't blocked by debris or an unfortunate misalignment of the various vessels within the *Twilight*, making entrance to whatever lies at the centre impossible. Considering the mission's time constraints, too many obstacles along the way may very well cause them to have to abort. If asked, Brother-Sergeant Agamorr states, *"Yes, this may very well be a fool's errand. Yet our duty to the fallen is clear—we must attempt it."*

At this point, one or more of the Acolytes may be asking, *"Why us?"* Especially as they might consider themselves not only under-equipped, but also under-skilled. The Brother-Sergeant sums it up nicely, *"The Inquisition will allow none but their own upon the Twilight. There is no time to get anyone else. Your master feels that you have proven yourselves capable of taking on this mission, and while you are clearly trusted, you are also expendable... As am I."* The Brother-Sergeant smiles slightly after he says this.

INTO THE TWILIGHT

The Acolytes have been granted the use of an assault boat named Helios, a small vessel capable of latching onto the side of the space hulk with a series of magnetic clamps, then blasting through its hull with melta charges. If none of the Acolytes is capable of piloting the craft, Brother-Sergeant Agamorr can manage it reasonably well, though if this is the case, he brings a few special pieces of equipment that will allow him to handle controls far smaller than his hands could normally manage. Agamorr lays out the Naval maps and a few of the pictographs of the hulk over an internally lit chart table to discuss what approach their ship should take with the Acolytes. Agamorr (unsurprisingly) favours a direct approach, trying to latch onto the *Twilight* as close to the centre of its mass as possible, though he'll listen to whatever the Acolytes have to say. The Navy has noted that the space hulk has slowly been rotating in a clockwise/corkscrew fashion as it nears Scintilla. Acolytes successfully making a **Routine (+20) Scholastic Lore (Astronomy) Test**

realise that regardless of gravity conditions, it would therefore be wise to approach the underside of the hulk, as its rotation will carry them up and eventually over during the first few hours after they enter it.

Since time is of the essence, the Acolytes will doubtless want to be on their way as soon as possible. Still, they have to wait ten minutes or so for Tech-Priest Volwyr of the Adeptus Mechanicus to chant the Litany of the Sleeping Leviathan, a benediction for those about to enter a space hulk, as he blesses their boat and anoints each of the Acolytes with drops of sacred oils. The engines of the Helios easily ignite and the Acolytes are on their way. As their ship leaves the hold of the Magnus Echthelion, the Acolytes will see other Imperial capital ships in the distance, but over the next forty-five minutes the immense shape that looms ahead of them will dwarf all others as the Helios comes up and around to head towards the *Twilight*.

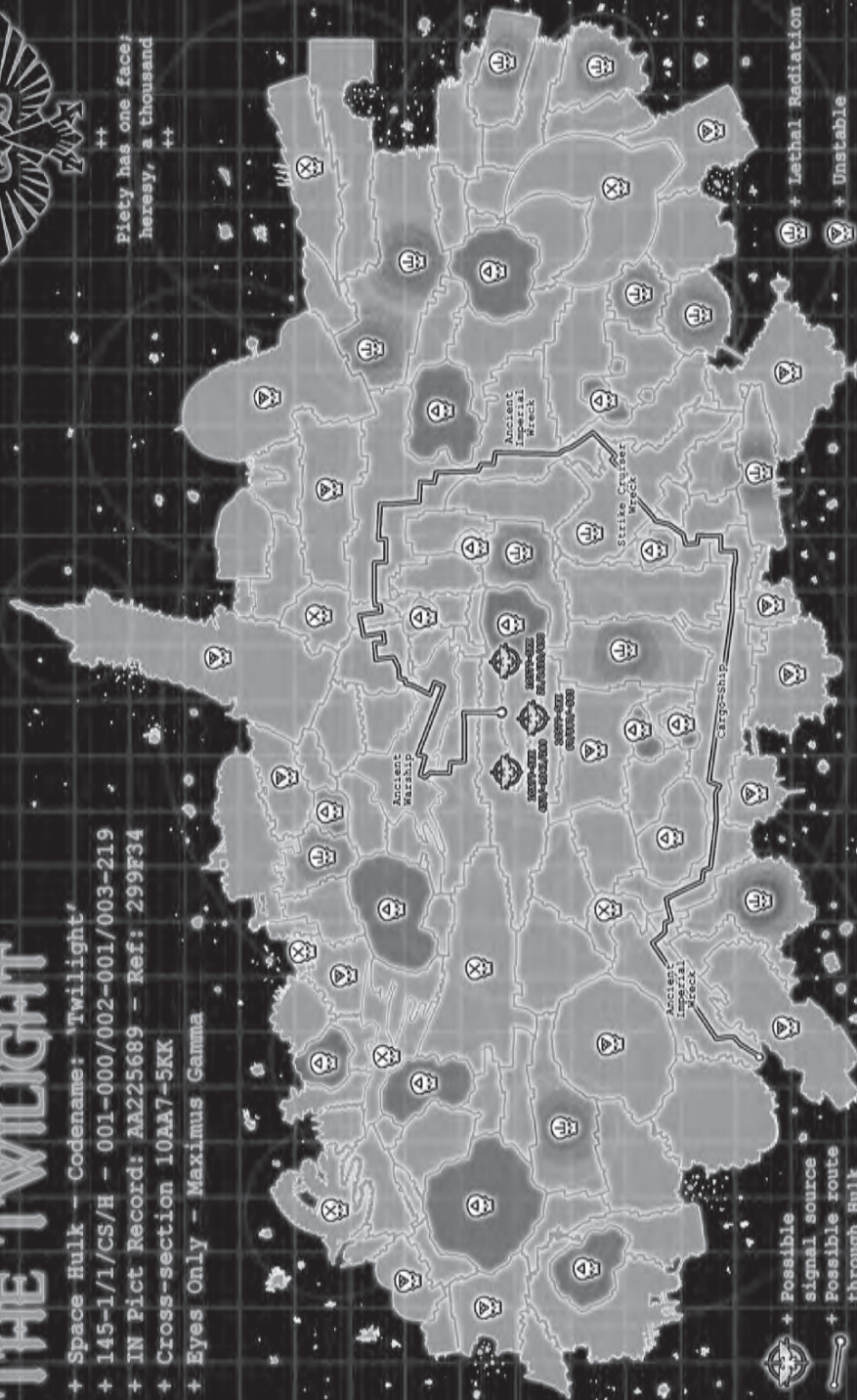
The Magnus Echthelion was one of the largest vessels that you had ever seen up close, but as you slowly near the space hulk looming before you, you realise it would take ten or more such cruisers welded together to even begin to approach the sheer size of the *Twilight*. The space hulk has a roughly ovoid shape, with various pieces of ancient craft sticking out at odd angles from its long central mass. As you draw closer, you're certain that several of the *Twilight's* protrusions resemble no Imperial ship or indeed, anything ever built in the Emperor's shipyards. The dense material clustered between the myriad of ships superficially resembles stone, but the scanners of the Helios return no useful information about it. Indeed, a liberal interpretation of the readings would suggest that there is no material holding the various derelict ships of the space hulk together at all.

As the Helios approaches the *Twilight*, have all the Acolytes make a **Hard (–20) Awareness Test**. A success means that they notice something unusual about the space hulk—portions of the *Twilight* seem to move while standing still, as if occluded by a wave of heat distortion. If they fix their gaze on any given section of the hulk, though, there appears to be nothing wrong with it. No instrumentation can confirm what they're seeing and Acolytes that failed the Test just cannot see what they're referring to. This is just the first of many unnatural effects that the Acolytes will encounter upon the *Twilight*; see **A Warped Derelict** for more details.

THE TWILIGHT

- + Space Hulk - Codename: 'Twilight'
- + 145-1/1/CS/H - 001-000/002-001/003-219
- + IN Pict Record: AA225689 - Ref: 299F34
- + Cross-section 10AA7-5KK
- + Eyes Only - Maximus Gamma

++
piety has one face;
heresy, a thousand
++



- + Lethal Radiation
- + Unstable
- + Solid Material
- + Xenos Taint

++ The Emperor is master of the Galaxy, but the Captain is master of his ship ++

- + Possible signal source
- + Possible route through Hulk



DATA-SLATE, Model. 79-ST-EI.41K



TIME: 25.6 min

II: SHADES ON TWILIGHT

A WARPED DERELICT

Space hulks, at the best of times, are strange and dangerous places that only the brave and foolish tread within lightly. Long exposure to the warp means that many of them fail to conform to the laws of realspace. The *Twilight* is far more than any standard hulk though: it's a tomb. The *Twilight* is essentially a vast mausoleum, haunted by the spirits (or warp signatures) of the psykers slain in the final duel between Adorjin and Nekaybraianon. The Black Ship upon which they died is at the very heart of the *Twilight*. Correspondingly, the closer one gets to the centre of the vessel, the stranger the phenomena get as one nears the heart of the spirits' anger. There are several parts of this adventure that describe specific supernatural events that will occur to the Acolytes as they journey throughout the ship. The following are various ideas for effects and general weird sights that you can include as they move from scene to scene aboard the hulk:

- Various pieces of technological gear suddenly stop functioning for no apparent reason. Neither Tech-Use, nor appropriate Scholastic Lore Tests can reveal anything wrong with the gear. Nor is there any apparent cause for what's changed when they suddenly flare back to life and start functioning again.
- The floor beneath one the Acolytes flickers, showing a glimpse of the stars outside, before promptly becoming opaque again.
- Gravity may also become fickle. It is assumed for the most part that the *Twilight* has enough gravity for the Acolytes to move about with relative ease. However, it is possible that they may stumble into tunnels or chambers of heavy gravity, zero gravity or even where gravity is reversed where up suddenly becomes down.
- The Acolytes come upon the corpses of some seriously twisted looking xenofoms at the controls of an unidentifiable device that sits at the centre of a large vaulted chamber. The aliens are many limbed monstrosities that appear to be manipulating the controls of what resembles a large pipe organ.
- Have the Acolytes make a Challenging Awareness Test. Any level of success indicates that they notice that the patina of rust within a corridor accurately forms a broken aquila upon the wall.
- The Acolytes all begin to catch the scent of an incredibly powerful but completely improbable smell, for example, a series of corridors smell overwhelmingly of roses. Acolytes who have kept their vac-suits sealed can still smell it.
- The Acolytes encounter the remains of a xenos ship that was clearly once a living vessel. The organic exterior of the ship has partially sloughed off exposing the internal housing of the craft, which strongly resembles bone. The fleshy outer shell has survived due to the extreme cold.
- After the Acolytes have been travelling through a sector of the *Twilight* where gravity functions for a time, the Acolytes' breathing suddenly sounds incredibly loud as it becomes the only sound they can hear.

When the *Helios* is several thousand kilometres out from the *Twilight*, a vox message comes in from the Imperial Navy indicating that several ships have detected energy fluctuations within the space hulk. While the Acolytes are digesting that particular piece of information, one of the vessels that make-up the bulk of the *Twilight* opens up on them with a series of energy batteries. Even at that vast (though rapidly shrinking) distance, the pilot of the *Helios* has very little time to compensate before long blasts of blue-green energy begin sizzling past the craft. If the pilot is Brother-Captain Agamorr, he yells, "Strap yourselves in!" Before pushing the *Helios*'s engines as far into "the red" as they'll go, rocketing the small ship towards the space hulk in an effort to swiftly pass inside the cannon's range. Make some die rolls for the effect it will have on your players—a particularly bad roll will herald a shot skimming the side of

the *Helios* and a pronouncement that their oxygen levels are now rapidly dropping. If one of the Acolytes is the pilot, now is his time to shine. Have him make a **Challenging Pilot Test**. No successes on the Test indicate that their craft gets hit as above and starts losing air. Success means that the pilot has managed to avoid the initial barrage.

As the *Helios* brings them closer to the slowly rotating *Twilight*, the shots briefly intensify as the Acolytes try to find the correct entry point amidst the blasts of destructive energy. Have everyone but the pilot (who will be distracted by efforts to keep them all alive) make a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test**. Success means that they notice what looks to be another ship silhouetted against the barrages of the *Twilight* (this is actually the rival team's vessel) which they swiftly lose sight of unless they achieved one or more degrees of success, in which case, they can see that the other ship also appears to be

attempting to reach the space hulk before they lose sight of it amidst the flashes. Regardless, none of the *Helios*'s instrumentation picks up the other ship and, if they ask the Magnus Echthelion via vox, they claim to be unable to verify the presence of any other vessels due to the *Twilight*'s interference.

After weathering the storm, the *Helios* moves to synch-up with a decent mooring point while avoiding the fields of debris that are slowly being shed from the space hulk. The assault craft slides into position flawlessly against one of the many hulls of the *Twilight* with a resonate clang. As the Acolytes prepare themselves testing their equipment, Brother-Agamorr locks his helmet on and quietly intones portions of the Astartes Litany of Battle as he checks his weapons. Acolytes that wish to can make Tech-Use Tests with their auspexes to detect anything from the *Twilight*. Success indicates no apparent movement, but odd fluctuations in the readings implying that there is definitely something strange about the hulk. Failure shows an all clear. When the team is prepared, they set off the melta charges producing a wave of heat that they can feel even in the *Helios*'s assault room. With a muffled "thump" a section of the *Twilight*'s hull falls inward and the *Twilight* is breached. All of the Acolytes' chronos read 12 hours till detonation.

The corridor before them appears to be one of Imperial construction. The majority of the *Twilight*'s interior is covered with a light layer of frost, which coats everything from ceiling to floor. The Acolytes' boots make distinctive crunching sounds as they step onto the ice-coated deck, disturbing small bits of ice, which slowly spiral away due to the lack of gravity. The interior runes on their vac-

suits indicate that the atmosphere within the *Twilight* is, amazingly enough, breathable. The Acolytes can retract their face shields if they wish—the air is indeed breathable, just very, very cold. Their breath plumes out in great long waves as they breath in the void-chilled air. Brother-Sergeant Agamorr moves to take point unless a particularly stealthy Acolyte offers to scout ahead. **All Stealth Tests for silent movement suffer a -10 penalty** due to the noisy layers of ice on the floors and the need to securely place their feet against the metal decks.

Secretly make a **Challenging Psyniscience Test** for any psyker brought aboard the *Twilight*. Any level of success indicates the unconscious muttering of the phrase, "It's watching us." The psyker will not remember doing so. Failure has no effect. A more purposeful use of the Skill will indicate that the immaterium is flowing unimpeded through the space hulk—so much so that realspace make be partially disrupted within its mass.

Any Acolyte that thinks to do so can check their vox-channels with the Navy. As long as they're standing within a few paces of the *Helios*, their equipment works fine. The deeper they go into the *Twilight*'s corridors, the more fragmented communication becomes. Within a hundred paces, they can no longer discern vox communication from outside the space hulk. The good news is that the advanced vox-caster that the Naval engineers have entrusted to the Acolytes allows them to communicate with one another from various sections of the *Twilight*. Give 25 xp on the spot to the first Acolyte who remarks something along the lines of, "Wait a minute, how is Adorjin's signal being broadcast then?"



WARP BEASTS

Savage warp entities that roam the fringes of the immaterium searching for prey, Warp Beasts are vicious predators thought to derive from humanity's fear of being hunted. They are eternally voracious, never satisfied no matter how much their blood lust is satiated. When in the warp, they are partially immaterial allowing them to hunt down weaker energy beings. If they can find a way into realspace, they automatically take on a material form, allowing them to hunt and consume living creatures. The Dark Eldar utilise them as entertainment in their blood-spattered arenas and will often employ them as hunting beasts. Warp Beasts are roughly analogous to a canine, typically bearing a lean quadruped form excellent for running down prey. They often stand as much as four feet high at the shoulder—though some of the truly ancient ones have grown to vast sizes. Their forms are wildly varied with no two exactly alike, though they all share scintillating burning eyes that shine with an unwholesome feral light perfect for cutting through the gloom of the immaterium.

Profiles for the **Warp Beasts** can be found on **page 86**.

FIRST CONTACT

For the first two hours after their entrance into the *Twilight*, the corridors of the ship that the Acolytes' move through appears to be Imperial, so its layout is relatively familiar. While travelling, they and the Brother-Sergeant occasionally have to force open sealed doors, sometimes locked, sometimes simply functionless due to centuries (or millennia) of neglect. Although the rime of ice still coats the ship, perceptive Acolytes can make a **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test** to notice that the cold is lessening as they journey inwards—a fact that doesn't make any sense to anyone with any science-based Scholastic Lore.

As the band passes into the broken remains of a larger room, the first in a series of what appears to be crumbling storage chambers, they are attacked from the shadows by several twisted hunting creatures brought from the warp by the Dark Eldar and set loose to roam the corridors of the *Twilight*. Have all present, including Brother-Sergeant Agamorr, make a sight based **Awareness/Perception Test opposed by the Warp Beasts' Silent Move**—which is not penalised by the ice. Those that succeed notice the opalescent burning eyes of the Warp Beasts before they lunge from the shadows, and therefore are not surprised for the first Round of combat. Those that fail, are Surprised by the beasts' sudden, savage attack. There are three creatures that pounce from the darkness, one of which dives on Brother-Sergeant Agamorr while the other two menace the Acolytes. The Warp Beasts do not seem to be affected in the slightest by the lack of gravity—in fact, they seem to move impossibly fast for such large animals.

The Warp Beasts attack the largest Acolytes first, each one picking a separate target. Their tactics are straightforward: they attack to kill, trying to tear out throats if they can. Acolytes inexperienced with fighting in zero gravity will have a difficult time fending them off and will suffer a **-10 penalty to their attacks**. The beast that attacks the Astartes looks like a mastiff with peeled off skin. One of the two attacking the Acolytes seems to be nothing but bones and sinew, its musculature missing; the other resembles a panther apparently made of flickering grey flames. When wounded, all of the creatures bleed a bluish ichor that floats in globules through the room, presumably soon joined by the crimson spurts of the wounded Acolytes.

Brother-Sergeant Agamorr roars out "*For the Emperor!*", as the Warp Beast first lunges at him. He unlimbers his thunderhammer so fast it almost seems to teleport into his hand. You can play out his fight if you wish—otherwise, assume it takes three Rounds. During the first two Rounds, the beast attempts to rip into the Space Marine's armour while the Brother-Sergeant manoeuvres to get the creature into the position that he wants it. On the third Round, Agamorr boots the predator back and follows with a two-handed swing with his hammer that staves in its head and knocks its corpse ten metres across the room to lie in a smoking ruin in a far corner. The Brother-Sergeant then immediately moves to help the Acolytes with the other two beasts.

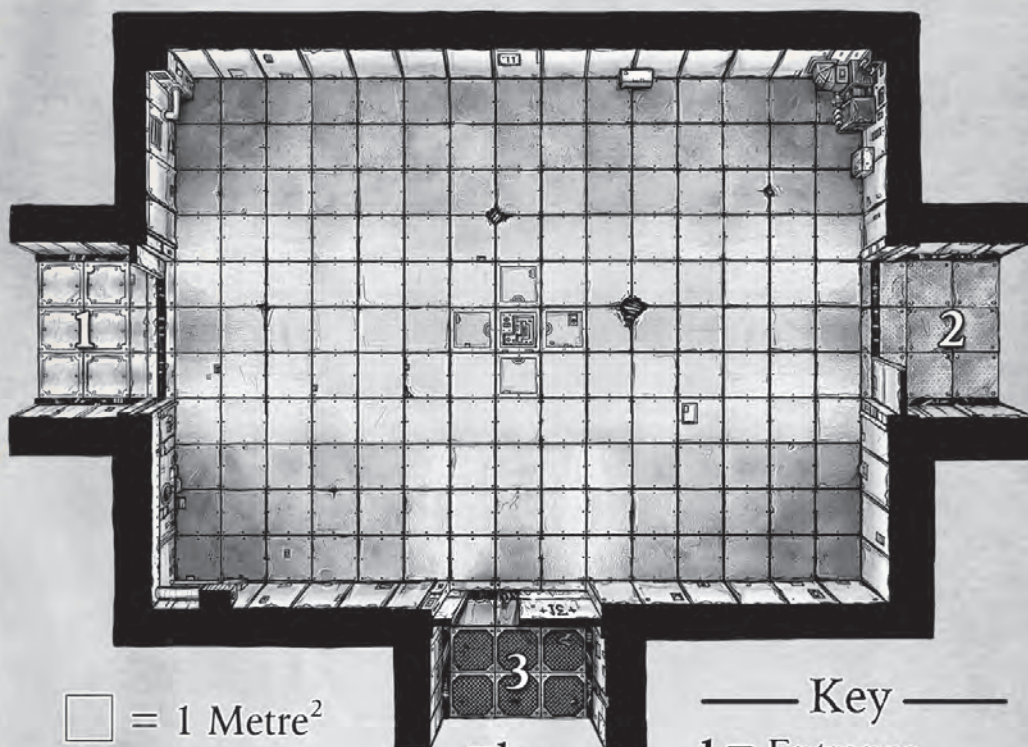
After the fight, have all present make a sight based **Difficult (-10) Perception Test**. Those that succeed notice a blade-lined collar wrapped around the neck of the largest Warp Beast. The collar is etched with xenos markings of some kind. Acolytes with appropriate Scholastic Lore Skills will recognize them as being similar to Eldar runes, but somehow sharper in appearance.

Brother-Sergeant Agamorr grimly states, "*We are not alone.*" He waits for a moment, allowing his statement to be understood before continuing, "*That script is the markings of a piratical breed of Eldar. Unholy xenos scum, vicious killers without honour. They sometimes use these creatures as hounds for their debased hunts. That one,*" he says as he gestures to the collared beast, "may have escaped them in the past, but I doubt it." (On the exceedingly rare chance that one of your Acolytes actually knows Dark Eldar script—the writing is the beast's name, Kharthus.) The Acolytes may doubtless wonder how many Dark Eldar, if any, are on the *Twilight* and what, exactly, they might be up to. They may suspect that the odd appearance of a space hulk within a solar system is due to the machinations of these evil xenos. Since the *Twilight* has been in realspace only a relatively short time, to their knowledge, they may also wonder how the Dark Eldar managed to get on board, especially since the Battlefleet Calixis has the hulk surrounded by warships which have not reported the presence of any xenos craft. If any of the Acolytes noticed the other ship as they were approaching the *Twilight*, they may wonder about how that got here as well.

If the Acolytes all fail to notice the beast's collar, the Brother-Sergeant refers to the beasts as, "*predators from the warp,*" and notes that such creatures can often be found on space hulks. The party thus move on from this encounter, as yet, none the wiser.



THE STORAGE CHAMBER



□ = 1 Metre²

Plan

— Key —

- 1 = Entrance
- 2 = Exit Route
- 3 = Warp Beast Entrance



IMP REC 1002370



145-1/1/CS/H

SPACE HULK TWILIGHT
CARTOPIC CC889/567/X345

BRING IT ON!

Don't make the mistake of thinking that an action adventure should simply be one long series of combats. While fight scenes should certainly play a prominent part in an action packed tale, it is really the pacing that makes a given adventure more exciting. As you move from scene to scene, keep the pace brisk; fights should always be fast and in the Acolytes' faces. Give your players little time to plan or react when their characters are attacked—make them decide instantly what they're going to do and, if they dither, they lose their action. After a vicious fight, you should then counterpoint it with a slightly slower scene, but always keep the adventure moving.

ALL IS NOT AS IT SEEMS

Groups alerted to the possible presence of the Dark Eldar will likely wish to move forward carefully, but move they must as the clock is ticking. The Acolytes will soon run into an imposing sight: a massive jagged crack in the side of the vessel through which they've been travelling. Since the way forward is blocked by tons of twisted metal, through this fracture they must proceed. Once through the crack, a vaulted ceiling formed from a mass of asteroid rock and the broken keel of an ancient vessel stretches up above the Acolytes. The hulls of several other craft along with the asteroid form the walls of this "cavern" and there is an opening that the party's scanners will indicate as a viable passageway for them to continue down. As they enter read, or paraphrase the following:

As you step into this cavern, frost suddenly forms icy patterns on your clothing and equipment. A frail shape flickers and materialises out of one of the walls. The thin figure appears to be a young human girl, no more than seven, dressed in tattered black rags with limp dirty brown hair that hangs in front of her eyes. She has no survival or breathing apparatus of any kind. Her feet are bare, but leave no prints in the ice as she stumbles silently towards you. Her skin is deathly pale and her form is translucent, allowing you to see right through her to the bulkhead beyond.

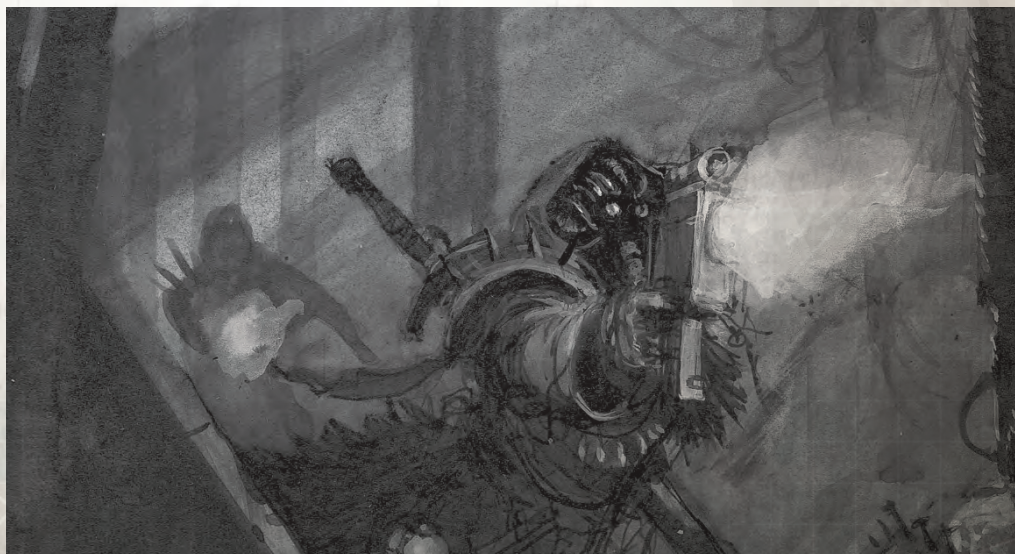
The girl halts a few metres away and studies you and the Brother-Sergeant. Her voice is very soft, but clearly audible as she states: *"You're in big trouble now."*

This will no doubt take the Acolytes aback. If any of the Acolytes uses their auspexes on the girl, a successful **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use Test** will indicate that there is nothing there unless the character achieves two or more degrees of success' in which case, he detects an unidentifiable bio-energy pattern. If the Acolytes look to the Space Marine, Brother-Sergeant Agamorr looks at the most senior of the Acolytes quietly, stating on a closed vox-channel, *"I have never seen anything like this before."* He will also gently slide his bolt pistol from its holster.

One or more of the characters will probably step up to ask who or what the girl is or what she means by them being in "trouble". Whatever they do, after a second she will simply smile and say, "They're coming. They're almost here."

Her head then whips up, cocked to the side as if she is listening to something that the Acolytes cannot hear. If there is a psyker present, allow him to make a **Hard (-20) Psyniscience Test**. Any level of success indicates that the psyker hears the sound of a cry, as if from far away, along with a name or perhaps a title that resonates with fear: "shadow raider". The girl turns and dives into the shadows quicker than any of the Acolytes can react, instantly vanishing into the darkness.

As the Acolytes are considering the Warp Ghost's abrupt exit, they hear a soft sound in the distance, echoing down the long corridor leading away from the vaulted chamber. The sound is distinct: that of a fluid dripping down into a pool of liquid. Apparently gravity functions in the passageways ahead of them—though they'll never have any explanation as to why or how such a thing is possible. As the adventure progresses from this point on, the sounds of dripping fluids and the occasional tinkling cascade of falling ice will sound all about the Acolytes as the ice on the corridors slowly begins to melt.



SPLINTERS IN THE DARK

At this point the Acolytes will have realised that something very strange is going on aboard the *Twilight* or they're seriously in the wrong line of work. The dripping corridors beyond the open area where they met the Warp Ghost eventually lead to a series of transport vessels that have been crushed together in strange ways. It takes the party some time to pick their way through. After letting them struggle for a while, casually suggest that those using auspexes should make a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test**. Success indicates that movement has been detected, external to the party. One degree of success gives the general direction and two degrees of success or more precisely locates a single bipedal xenos-form in the area just beyond where the party is standing.

Brother-Sergeant Agamorr will have drawn his bolt pistol while the PCs were scanning and he slowly sweeps the area with practiced ease, concentrating on the indicated direction if any of the Acolytes was particularly successful with their scan. His cautious advance soon hits a blockage that prevents easy silent movement forward; he gestures at himself, then at the small door frame before him and gives a dismissive hand gesture, indicating his inability to proceed without making noise. If one of the Acolytes has proved their stealth earlier, the Space Marine signals him forward, indicating that he should take point in preparation to enter the next area. Agamorr swivels his helmet to look at the nominal leader of the Acolytes and voxes a single word question, "Alive?" He'll try to disable lower extremities instead of going for kill shots if asked to do so—otherwise, he'll back up whoever goes through the door first with as much force as necessary to remove all opposition.

The space beyond the twisted cargo transports holds a single occupant: a Dark Eldar scout named Ketserar who is presently searching for an overdue pack of Warp Beasts. Yes, those Warp Beasts. Ketserar, no fool by any stretch, is alert for trouble, as he realises that anything that could have delayed the Warp Beasts could certainly undo him. He moves through the shadows of the space hulk, keeping an eye on the various entrances to whatever area he is moving through if he can. He has a motion tracker, but luckily for the Acolytes, his equipment has been acting strangely due to the

baleful influence of the *Twilight*—so they do have a decent chance to catch him unawares. He'll oppose any Acolyte Silent Move Tests with his Awareness. If he sees any of the Acolytes or the Brother-Sergeant before they see him, he'll attempt to slip unnoticed into the shadows so that he can leave and report their presence to his master, the Haemonculus Akirvas (see page 82) as his communication equipment is almost as troubled as his motion tracker. However, the Acolyte's equipment will detect him trying to leave—especially if they scored one or more degrees of success on their **Tech-Use Tests**.

Either way, a fight here is inevitable. The only question is who will attack first? Ketserar will start the ball rolling by lobbing a vicious grenade-like weapon called a terrorfex into the midst of the Acolytes then opening up with one of the cruel guns of the Dark Eldar, a vicious side arm known as a splinter pistol. Ketserar doesn't fight to injure his opponents—he fights to kill. Being outnumbered by the Acolytes doesn't faze him in the slightest as he believes himself superior to a group of inferior "mon-keigh" (as Eldar contemptuously refer to humans), but when Brother-Sergeant Agamorr eventually tears his way into the room, the Dark Eldar prepares to sell his life dearly.

When the Dark Eldar realises the magnitude of the force he is fighting, he takes up a defensive stance to spend a Round fishing an unusual object out of one of his pouches. The device is a strange and disturbing shape, reminiscent of a spiral shell, and seemingly formed from glass in colours beyond the human visual spectrum range, making it both compulsive and repugnant to the eye at once. Ketserar spends a Half Action holding part of the strange device to his mouth and screaming into it. The following Round, blood comes pouring down out of his mouth and from his lips as he pulls the hideous "whistle" away with a savage grin on his sallow features. The Dark Eldar Scout will continue to fight on, confident that should he fall, vengeance will come via strange angles of space and time... Ketserar will fight to the death, unwilling to be captured by "primitive savages". If the Acolytes manage to get the jump on Ketserar or mortally wound him, he will make his final act of defiance to be the activation of the omni-dimensional whistle. A feral smile doesn't leave his visage as he slumps, dead, to the floor.

The Dark Eldar scout's body will likely cause more questions than it answers. Ketserar has recognisable exploratory gear, such as tightly coiled ropes and pinions, meaning he knew that he was going to be exploring or perhaps

salvaging aboard the space hulk. How the Dark Eldar knew about the *Twilight* will certainly become a relevant question in the Acolytes' minds, but even more prevalent will be how the xenos got on board. Brother-Sergeant Agamorr considers this and states his opinion. "They are ancient and cunning. They are rumoured to know far more secrets of the warp than is wise for those who would remain sane. Perhaps they learned of the *Twilight's* coming in the shifting tides of the aethyr. It matters not. However they arrived, they are here now. I doubt this one travelled alone." The rest of Ketserar's equipment consists of light armour, various knick-knacks and runic pendants, along with his weapons. Acolytes searching the body carefully will automatically notice that one of the Dark Eldar scout's pendants is identical to the symbol of the Serrated Query.

There is also, of course, the device.

The strange apparatus appears to be made of glass, but close inspection reveals intricate circuitry patterns inlaid throughout the xenos machine. The patterns don't resemble the xenos-circuitry from *Rejoice For You Are True*. Characters with **Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Forbidden Tech, Warp or Xenos)** can make a **Difficult (-10) Forbidden Lore Test** to ascertain what the device might be. Any level of

success notes the similarities between the device and some of the machines that Astropaths use to boost their psychically projected messages through the immaterium. This may well lead to the Acolytes swiftly becoming paranoid of whatever's likely coming for them now. The Dark Eldar's device is, as mentioned above, an extra-dimensional whistle capable of clearly sounding in both realspace and the warp for massive distances. Ketserar's final call was all too successful—which the Acolytes will eventually discover for themselves.

A psyker using the appropriate Psychic Disciplines may have gleaned a number of particularly unpleasant insights into the mind of the Dark Eldar, but fortunately not enough to truly scar. Psychically reading nearly anything in the scout's possession leads to a series of searing, painful visions all slicked in blood. Ketserar's thoughts are unlikely to be in any language a psyker would understand, but a truly successful Mind Scan may reveal images of a silver-covered book, as he knew that he and the members of his Kabal were ordered aboard the space hulk to search for a book of some sort, not in point of fact, a blade. After the Acolytes have gleaned all they can from the Dark Eldar, they can move on to the next scene.

KETSERAR

Like his entire corrupt race, Ketserar lives for the moments in which he can inflict misery and death upon others, the more acute or exquisite, the better. He is particularly fond of watching Warp Beasts rip screaming innocents to pieces. Ketserar is sworn to the service of the Kabal of Crimson Woes, a group of Dark Eldar who regularly commit piracy within the Calixis Sector. As a scout, he has more patience than most of his kind; enabling him to wait comparatively longer in order to bring about more satisfying kills. He doesn't speak the language of the Mon-keigh and wouldn't bother to do so even if he could. On the off-chance that one or more of the Acolytes can speak his tongue, his fear of Akirvas prevents him from speaking out anything more than dire insults, even under the most grievous of tortures.

Ketserar's profile can be found on **page 86**.



A WARP-SPAWNED TIDE

The Acolytes easily find a clear path out of the area of shattered transports. Lights flicker in the distance and heading towards these leads the Acolytes into the heart of a majestic Imperial ship, built in an ancient style with long, open hallways that stretch for hundreds of metres. The majority of their chronos indicate that they've been on the space hulk close to four hours, giving them around two hours more before they have to turn back—one or two of the chronos, though, read completely differently, having either gained or lost time in relation to the others. However, by their calculations, they should be approaching the heart of the space hulk, and the corridors of the big Imperial ship they've found all seem to be heading in the right direction, according to their auspexes. The Imperial ship is a bit disconcerting though—its corridor running lights are all on.

Some twenty minutes after the Acolytes have journeyed into the corridors of the ancient craft they come into an area where the hallways widen into what appears as some sort of cargo hold or other storage section of a capital ship. There seem to be several different ways to proceed. Just after they pass under a large arched doorway to enter the widening passageways, their advanced vox-caster squawks into life, registering a signal identical to that which the Inquisition identified as carrying Adorjin's call sign. The sound pulses continue for some twenty seconds before going still. The signal seems to be originating in the direction of one of the side corridors. Precisely as it ends though, the Acolytes hear a deep barking sound echoing down the largest hall in front of them. Two massive Warp Beasts, larger than the ones the Acolytes fought earlier, come tearing down the corridor toward them, one of which is running along the wall of the passageway, apparently unaffected by local gravity. The creature running along the floor is a bone-white colour, while the one tearing along the wall leaves a trail of dripping crimson ichor in its wake, which stains the ice slush on the corridor's floor red. It has a body of raw, bleeding muscles. The Warp Beasts charge into the characters without hesitation. The fight should be fast and vicious as there is little subtlety in the creatures' tactics.

Profiles for larger **Warp Beasts** can be found on **page 86**.

With Brother-Sergeant Agamorr's help, the Acolytes will triumph swiftly over the beasts, though they may sustain an injury or two. As the party is standing about panting from their recent exertions, they see something in the distance:



At the limits of your vision, at the farthest end of the long hallway ahead of you, you can see what appears to be a writhing mass of water flowing down the corridor towards you. As it nears, you realise that it is not liquid approaching. A mass of Warp Beasts surges down the passageway towards you, running along every surface from floor to ceiling without impediment. Their forms are beyond counting, each one more terrible than the next.

Have all of the Acolytes make a **Disturbing Fear (Willpower) Test**. Regardless of the characters' reactions, Brother-Sergeant Agamorr doesn't hesitate, "MOVE! NOW!" He seizes any of the group that seem to be frozen in shock and shoves them towards the side corridor, then proceeds to ready his weapons. The Brother-Sergeant realises that the group has no chance against such numbers, and he can buy them more time if he fights alone. He looks about at the band, signalling out the greatest warrior present and solemnly stating, "It falls to you to protect them, now. Find the blade. May the Emperor guide you in the darkness."

The Brother-Sergeant turns towards the centre of the hold, directly across from the corridor where the Warp Beasts are coming from. A series of muffled explosions shake the hulk as the Space Marine calmly empties his bolt pistol into the oncoming mass of xenos creatures. Acolytes, with more courage than brains, may stay long enough to see several of the horrific canine-things pulverized by one mighty sweep of Agamorr's thunderhammer before he is lost to sight as the mass of Warp Beasts engulf him.

II: SHADES ON TWILIGHT



Hopefully, the Acolytes have the sense not to let the valiant Brother-Sergeant's sacrifice be in vain, as all he has really bought them is a little extra time. The extended cargo hold area has several viable exits, but only one obviously heads more or less in the direction they want to go, as the other corridor that was wending in the right direction is presently filled with Warp Beasts. As the Acolytes depart, they can hear the Space Marine fighting on, over the vox. After a minute of grunts and snarls, he roars, "FOR THE EMPEROR!" once, before the vox-channel goes dead... Brother-Sergeant Agamorr plays a part in the conclusion of *Shades On Twilight* but the Acolytes should definitely regard him as departed at this point.

Before the Acolytes flee down their chosen passageway, somebody might suggest leaving a booby trap behind, such as rigged krak grenades or some other such deterrent. Give them some Experience Points for cunning and make a point of eventually noting that they hear an explosion in the distance behind them as they run deeper into the hulk. Make it clear that they definitely feel they're still being hunted. They hear sounds in the distance, echoing along the corridors of the space hulk, barks, yelps, the click of claws against metal and stone.

As they pass down the darkened corridor, they soon leave the Imperial ship behind and move into a passage formed of broken igneous rock. As weird as that is, it swiftly gets stranger—the corridor is clearly not accidental, but deliberately carved. Well, technically the spirits of dead psykers who don't like walking through solid objects if they can help it formed it, but the Acolytes are unlikely to puzzle that one out at the moment. The corridor soon ends at an impressive sight: a massive open area, in which one half of a large dark-hulled ship sticks out of a rocky outcropping. The ship's hull is intricately engraved, though long years have blunted or obscured many of the symbols that mark its exterior. It is also covered in what appears to be broken statuary, reminiscent of gargoyles, and centuries of accumulated grey dust. Imperial psykers will instantly recognise the ship for what it is: one of the infamous Black Ships of the Inquisition. All others will have to successfully make a **Routine (+20) Forbidden Lore (Inquisition or Psykers) Test** in order to discern what the ornate dark ship is. Any psyker in the group should make an **Ordinary (+10) Psyniscience Test** to feel the strange waves of psychic energy that resonate over the hull of the craft. Allow any savants in the group as well as any particularly well-educated characters to make a **Difficult (–10) Perception Test** as they quickly study the hull. Any level of success

indicates that they notice that many of the symbols carved into the ship's exterior have been altered or visibly marred. Characters with an appropriate **Forbidden Lore (Daemonology, Psykers, Forbidden Tech, or Warp)** realise that these are the ship's hexagrammic wards that have been destroyed. Acolytes attempting to use their auspexes will discover that they are wildly dysfunctional. They'll also discover, much to their consternation, that none of their chronos show the same countdown time anymore.

A TENSE INTRODUCTION

If the Acolytes have already stated that they are "moving with stealth" through the hulk, ask them to take a **Silent Move Test** and **secretly Oppose this with a Perception Test** from Lady D and Sergeant Forden (see following). If the Acolytes win the Opposed Test, they have the opportunity to make a **Hard (–20) Awareness Test** to notice the figures ahead. Otherwise, as they make their way through a tall chamber, approaching a set of entry doors on the underside of the Black Ship, a terse voice rings out, "Declare yourselves!" This is rapidly followed by the "ch-chunk" of a pump-action shotgun chambering a shell. The Acolytes can now make out one or more figures crouching in the shadows of the tall chamber, a mere ten metres away from them. A successful Awareness Test will identify two figures; one or more degrees of success will indicate that another two figures are also hiding on the opposite of the chamber.

The Acolytes have met their rivals and the bulk of the rest of this adventure is based on what they choose to do in the next few moments. The other team is a group of Acolytes not unlike the PCs, though slightly more experienced, sent by another Inquisitor to retrieve Adorjin's effects. This adventure presumes that Inquisitor Soldevan of Ordo Hereticus sent them to retrieve the Luminous Reproach for himself—but any rival Inquisitor will do. The point is that the rival team wants what the characters are after... Like the PCs, the majority of Soldevan's Acolytes were not informed that there were going to be any other teams aboard (see individual descriptions on **pages 72–73** for details). The only reason they don't immediately open fire is that they see that the Acolytes are human. Their first presumption (and quite likely that of the PCs as well) is that the other group is composed of pirates eager to plunder the hulk.

SOLDEVAN'S TEAM

ENGINEER MOLOCHAN

A once promising young Tech-priest, Molochan strayed into areas of research deemed heretical by the Adeptus Mechanicus and was found guilty of blasphemous studies; in his case, this was primarily due to the investigation of practical applications for various xenos technologies. Saved from “deletion” by the Inquisition, Molochan’s pardon is only in effect as long as he works for his new masters—a fact he is bitterly aware of. Still, the enginseer doesn’t entirely regret his lot; his new patron regularly lets him study xenos artefacts without comment. Molochan has been trying, unsuccessfully, to convince his companions that the various effects they’re encountering on the *Twilight* are “normal” for a space hulk. Though somewhat scrawny of appearance, the enginseer hails from the Lathes and is far stronger than he looks. Molochan desperately wishes to study the Luminous Reproach, but his priority is personal survival and he’ll encourage his team to make any deal with the rival party that will help achieve that end.



CALCULUS-LOGI TREMPAN

The nominal leader of Soldevan’s team, Trempan was born at the edge of Imperial space on the planet Vaxanide. Trempan was a lonely child, neglected by his parents and taken to wandering as he pleased. During one of his many aimless excursions, he came upon a group of men tormenting some sort of small, young xenofom. Trempan rushed to defend the helpless alien, however, his efforts were rewarded with him being nearly beaten to death. His assailants thought they finished him off with a stub revolver round to the head. His courage, though, had not gone unnoticed. Trempan awoke several days later feeling fine. In fact, better than fine—he was fully recovered. It was not until some years later that Trempan discovered that the left hemisphere of his brain and several large portions of his spinal column had been replaced with xenos technology. Justly fearing the wrath of both the Adeptus Mechanicus and the Ecclesiarchy, Trempan took a bold chance and offered his services to the Inquisition. Trempan typically regards people as either tools or obstacles. If the player Acolytes offer any resistance without explaining who they are, he will order them killed with little hesitation. He is, ultimately, a very decent man and just as willing to deal honourably with the PCs—especially if they can prove that they work for the Inquisition.

SERGEANT FORDEN

An ex-Imperial Guard soldier, Forden comes from the infamously vicious feral world Dusk. When Forden was 17, a Duskan Mist Drake savaged his right arm near the shoulder. The jaws of Mist Drakes lock until either they or their prey are dead. In order to survive, Forden was forced to saw his own arm off with his own knife. His missing limb has long since been substituted by a graceless but powerful cybernetic replacement. He wears the Mist Drake's teeth on a necklace and he is constantly surrounded by swirling lho-smoke. Forden is an imposing man with a will of adamant and his master trusts him unreservedly, which is unfortunate as he is a traitor. Forden is a double agent serving the interests of the Serrated Query. The rest of his group is unaware of the presence of the *Liber Daemonica* (see page 81) or that Forden has orders to retrieve it at any cost—all of the others with him (and certainly the PCs) are expendable. Forden will actually encourage an alliance with the PCs, as he'll believe that their presence will help him hide his true mission from Trempan.



LADY D

An ex-hive ganger with a wicked sense of humour and a strong taste for adventure, Lady D loves her life. Well aware that the Inquisition has given her an existence she could have never had on her own, she takes her job very seriously, but that doesn't mean she can't have fun killing heretics, now does it? Lady D is an adrenaline junkie who lives for the excitement to be found in the midst of a violent melee. She dyes her hair brilliant colours (presently dark pink with golden tips) and wears a riot of colours on her person. Lady D trusts no one completely—she will follow Trempan's lead within reason, but regardless of how well her "boys" get along with the PCs, she'll keep an eye on them at all times.

Profiles for all of Soldevan's team can be found on page 87.



WARDS

Wards are legendary creations dating far back into the Dark Age of Technology. Wards are techno-arcanic devices that project subtle energy fields capable of influencing warp emanations. They are two types; hexagrammic and pentagrammic.

Hexagrammic wards are designed to protect against psychic attacks, as the wards “siphon” away the energy of the immaterium, channelling it into harmless static discharges. Sanctioned psykers will be all too familiar with this type of ward, having been exposed to them during their “stay” on-board a Black Ship.

Pentagrammic wards exist to defend humanity against Daemons and the corrupt energies they wield. Since the knowledge of Daemons is proscribed, the existence of pentagrammic wards is a secret known to few outside of the Inquisition, with the exception of those at the highest levels of the Adeptus Ministorum and the Tech-Priests of the Machine God.

Soldevan’s team is sharp and suspicious of the characters, but experienced enough in the ways of the Inquisition that they are not unwilling to believe that a second team could have been sent without their being informed. Imperial citizens, even pirates, are very cautious about asserting that they work for the Inquisition unless they can back up the claim. The punishment for falsely claiming to work for the Inquisition is far worse than a death sentence. Besides, Molochan and Trempan have both already been injured by Warp Beasts and are in a mood to avoid a fight if they can.

If the two teams do get into a protracted gunfight (against all better judgement), they will have about eight Rounds of fighting before hearing the approach of dozens of Warp Beasts down the various tunnels leading to where they stand. This will either bring about an abrupt change in tactics or result in both parties getting slaughtered. If the sounds of the baying Warp Beasts draw near and one or more of his team are out of the fight, if alive the already wounded Trempan will surrender, intending to escape at a later juncture. Ruthless Acolytes may just execute the other team’s survivors without mercy. Any character that participates in murdering Inquisition members who have surrendered automatically get **2 Corruption Points** for each person they help to kill.

Presuming that the two groups come to some sort of arrangement, the Warp Beasts are still not so far away and rapidly approaching. The open door seems to be provident, especially since the braying of Warp Beasts is beginning to resound

down the corridors about them. The doors of the Black Ship bear crudely marked runes that seem to have been seared into the metal of the ship itself—Adorjin’s original pentagrammic wards, which she sealed with her own blood, were made permanent by the spirits of the *Twilight*. A Savant with the appropriate **Forbidden Lore(s)** may realise that the pentagrammic wards are still very much intact, even though the hexagrammic wards have all been destroyed. They’ll certainly be aided in this by the fact that as the Warp Beast howls draw nearer, a soft energy begins to flicker over the sigils on the Black Ship’s doors. Acolytes can pass into the interior of the Black Ship without any problem, though they may feel a tingle of energy that makes the hairs on the backs of their necks rise. Several long-limbed, swifter Warp Beasts enter the cavern of the Black Ship, their opalescent eyes burning into the darkness beyond the ship. They begin to charge the Acolytes, but the foremost pull up and stop with fearful yelps as they draw near the vessel. The Warp Beasts are incapable of entering the Black Ship—even being in proximity to it clearly hurts and disorients them. After milling about for a time, many of them will return the way they came and a few will simply fade from vision.

Trempan (if present) will note dryly, “*Well isn’t that convenient? You think they know something we don’t?*” Time is still counting down until the *Twilight*’s destruction—though with all the chronos malfunctioning, there is no exact way to reckon how much time is left until the bombardment begins.



THAT WHICH REMAINS

The interior of the Black Ship is very dark, though clearly, unbelievably, there is still some sort of power generator functioning within its depths as pale red but functional running lights sporadically line the hallway floors of the ancient vessel. The Acolytes can hear faint sounds coming from somewhere in the ship, sounds which seem to resemble disquiet whispers. If the Acolytes expect their sanctioned psyker(s) to be able to conduct them through the ship, they're in for an unpleasant surprise—all psykers have their worst memories of their time spent on a Black Ship erased after their worthiness to continue in the service of the Imperium is approved, meaning they won't be any help as guides to the interior.

Black Ships are essentially prison vessels with large portions dedicated to holding cells of various sorts, all of which are inevitably lined with powerful pentagrammic wards. As with the exterior, any trace of the psychic wards has been expunged or altered from the interior, rendering them ineffective. While this may be of slight comfort to a psyker character who will find their abilities uninhibited, the rest of the Acolytes will probably not be too keen on what such a fact might portend. Where the Acolytes first enter the ship, they find a short staircase, which leads to a long corridor that runs along the spine of the vessel, traversing almost its entire length. The corridor is lined with what were once exceptionally powerfully warded cells to contain the most dangerous psykers, all of which now stand empty and broken.

As the group studies their surroundings, they will hear a soft nervous laugh come out of the darkness of the long corridor. The girl they saw earlier will walk out into the dim light, keeping her distance from the characters. They may note this time, however, that her presence is not accompanied by frost and she looks more substantial.

"Have you come to keep me company? Have you come to kill them? No? Are you Inquisitors? No? You'd better not be. No? Good. Then you should meet the Others. Yes the Others will very much want to meet you all. Him especially."

If any of Trempan's team is present, they'll look with widened eyes at characters that clearly recognise the girl along with comments such as, "Her... Again?" The Acolytes can once again try and question her but she will simply begin

to wander off humming tunelessly and singing, "Others, come to meet the Others".

The girl is unwilling to say much else, suggesting only that she will bring those present to speak with the "Others" if they wish, though not saying who they are. If the Acolytes ask where they are, she refers to the ship as, "The prison". If Trempan's group is present, they'll defer to the PCs for the moment as they've clearly encountered the girl before. Presuming that the Acolytes agree to her guiding them, read aloud the following. Even if they strike out on their own you can have them arrive in this same place, where the girl will be waiting.

You follow the girl along the lengthy corridor and eventually down a spiralling metal staircase that descends deep into the interior of the Black Ship. There, you enter a cavernous hold, as massive as a temple nave, which stretches up into the darkness above you, far beyond the reach of your lights. This deep within the Black Ship, the cold has only just begun to recede and a light mist fills the air. As you walk into the enveloping darkness, pale figures begin appearing about you, walking from the surrounding gloom with little warning.

This is more than just a little unnerving. Anyone who desires to walk deeper into the interior must succeed against a **Frightening (-10) Fear Test**. Those that fail react according to the normal rules. Fleeing characters will seek to escape from the hold for the comparative safety of the upper decks.

The figures are all dressed similarly to the girl, wearing the stained and tattered remains of some kind of uniform. There is no pattern to those that emerge from the shadows: there are both men and women, both young and old. Most are thin, though a rare few still have some girth. All of them appear to have had the colour leached from them, leaving them pale but shimmering reflections. All are clearly insubstantial and flicker and shift in the light. They study the Acolytes with hungry dark eyes, whispering incoherently into the gloom. More and more file in behind them until the characters are completely surrounded, though the mass of forms keep their distance from the Acolytes.

You can if you like at this point give the PCs a few moments to decide what to do. However, at least for the moment it doesn't seem like they are in any danger. After a second or so, the sea of ghosts will open and others will arrive.

THE GIRL

This young girl was once a psyker. Her parents called the Inquisition to have her removed after she started showing touches of minor telekinetic ability. After losing her parents and suffering several miserable weeks in the holds of the Black Ship, she was finally killed by Nekaybraianon's death throes. All that remains of her is a twisted reflection of what she once was in life, completely mad and with little memory of what she was before. With the arrival of the Acolytes, however, it is possible that she might regain some of her humanity and try to help them, though she is unlikely to know why.

As a Warp Ghost, the girl has no profile. However, the GM can feel free to give her Skills and Talents that would seem appropriate should the need arise.

The ghosts part before you, revealing the end of the chamber and a ghostly man wrapped in a dark robe comes forward. His eyes seem to glow as he regards the Acolytes, *"I was Crovus and these were those the Black Ship kept. Who were you?"*

At this point the Acolytes can decide just what it is they want to do. They cannot harm the ghosts (through the reverse is not true) so they will probably want to talk further to them if they want to be allowed to leave in peace or get some information.

If any of the Acolytes are skilled with words, now would be the time to speak up—none of Trempan's group are diplomats, their skills, in the main, lie elsewhere and once again they defer to the PCs. The PCs need to be careful. Given that these poor spirits were psykers seized by the Inquisition and given over to the Black Ships, where they all died, casually announcing to them that one is an Acolyte of the Inquisition is not a good idea if one doesn't intend on joining their ranks any time soon.

The ghosts' motivations are somewhat muddled and they are not sure what to make of the Acolytes. They retain enough memory to yearn for freedom, something Crovus has promised them. In fact, their desire to return home has directed the *Twilight* to Scintilla, the planet from which the bulk of them hail. Don't forget, however, that most of these ghosts are but psychic shadows of their former selves. Only a few of the strongest, like Crovus and Vogel (see below), retain much of their humanity. So trying to talk to them can be frustrating and they can be quick to anger. Crovus will be looking to make the measure of the Acolytes and see if they are wanting in the eyes of the Emperor.

So let your Acolytes answer as best they may and see if they manage to keep themselves

out of real trouble. As the moment is not yet ripe, if they brazenly announce that they're representatives of the Inquisition—the hold will go completely still and deathly silent. With a shriek that shakes the hold, the spirits fall upon the party as one, ripping them to pieces with a storm of furious spirit energy against which there is no defence. The Acolytes will awaken several hours later, having lost **1 Fate Point** permanently each, on the edge of the Black Ship with Vogel and the girl looking over their thoroughly bruised and battered forms. The bulk of their equipment will be ruined, with only half of the group's weapons still functional. Vogel will still explain what he can, as per the following section, but they'll be in a far worse position to confront the strike team from the Kabal of Crimson Woes.

Presuming that the Acolytes have been paying attention and got the gist of what's going on with the *Twilight's* denizens, they'll hopefully stick to the "Warriors of the Emperor" explanation, or explorators for the Imperial Navy or some other such answer that the spirits will accept for their presence. If such is the case, Crovus will be eyeballing them somewhat askance and starting to ask sharp questions when Vogel shows up.

As the ghostly leader seems to be considering what to do with you, a voice speaks up from the shadows: *"The Dead shouldn't plague the living, you know that Preacher,"* Crovus turns and snarls at the newly arrived figure, his eyes flaring in the darkness. *"You aren't welcome here, heretic."* A slight man in a long coat, dissimilar to the rags many of the other spirits wear, gives an elegant shrug as he glides into the hold. *"Neither are the shadow raiders, yet still they come. I may be a heretic, but you share my damnation."*

THE IMPERIAL CREED AND SPIRITS OF THE IMMATERIUM

The official position of the Ecclesiarchy on the spirits of the deceased is that the Emperor judges all faithful humans after death and, if they are worthy, grants them a place in his celestial army. Differing interpretations of the Imperial Creed offer a wide variety of explanations for what happens to those souls deemed unworthy of joining the God-Emperor's ranks, but who are not so heretical as to be damned out of hand. Some versions say they are reborn to try again, others, that they must wander the afterlife for a time, braving the dangers of the warp as penance for a life ill spent until their actions have redeemed them, proving them worthy of the God-Emperor's service. There are also many tales of legendary servants of the Emperor returning from the immaterium to the world of the living when the people of the Imperium once again need them. Some versions of the Creed refuse to acknowledge the sentience of such entities, referring to them in technical terms such as "post-life warp signatures" and "the aetheric charge contained by a residual personality". Regardless of the fine points of doctrine, the Ecclesiarchy does acknowledge the existence of spirits of the dead. Several branches of the Inquisition take a very active interest in such entities and their relationship to the warp. The bulk of Ordo Xenos, however, holds the opinions of the Eldar on such matters in contempt, as they are widely thought to be a race of liars who hate humanity and thus not to be trusted.

Just because the Acolytes are likely to believe in the existence of spirits doesn't make meeting a large group of them any less frightening.



Have the Acolytes make **Ordinary (+10) Perception Tests**. Any level of success means they easily notice how the spirits of the *Twilight* carefully draw back from Vogel, with traces of a strange mixture of respect, fear and concern in their pale eyes.

What follows should be a lively discussion between Vogel, Crovus and the PCs. Crovus will grudgingly explain that the time of ascension for the spirits is soon at hand and at last they will have their freedom. Vogel states that Crovus and the bulk of the other spirits are delusional and dangerous and that the Acolytes are all far better off with him.

If the Acolytes choose to side with Crovus (for the moment) Vogel will leave shaking his head. After Crovus has congratulated the group on their "good sense in ignoring the heretic", he will urge them to pray with him for the souls of those bound to the Black Ship. At this point they will also be able to get some information from him about who and what the spirits are. With the bulk of the group distracted, Sergeant Forden will quietly slip off into the dark holds of the Black Ship in search of his true objective. Unless one or more of the PCs make a point of going to speak with Vogel, they're likely to face the Kabal of Crimson Woes with little idea of what is happening. Skip the entire following section and go straight to **In the Dark** on page 82.

Presuming one or more of the Acolytes (wisely) goes to speak with Vogel. If Trempan is

present he will accompany them. Vogel resides in an old security station of some kind well away from the bulk of the others, which he will guide the PCs to. Read or paraphrase the following as the Acolytes arrive:

"I see you received my signal," Vogel announces by way of starting the conversation. "Don't bother with denials. I know who you are and why you have come. Not just for my own eternal rest but for a greater purpose. Know that I was once as you are. My name was Ishtan Vogel and it was my honour in life to serve Inquisitor Ereden Adorjin. I was, and by the God-Emperor's grace remain, an acolyte of the Inquisition."

His expression grows distance. *"I know I am dead, and yet not dead. I know the wards of this vessel have bound me to a mockery of life and that we were adrift in the immaterium for a very long time. I do not believe that I am... corrupt. But the years have been long and perhaps you should weigh the truth of my words. I know that we can't have much time; the Navy must surely be prepared to destroy this space hulk, yes? The hour draws near, they will be coming soon, and neither Crovus nor any of the others will bother to hold them at bay now that they believe the end is so near."* His words are bitter and he barks out a short sharp laugh. *"My apologies... where to begin? I know, with a question... how long has it been?"*

CROVUS

Crovus was in life a preacher who still remembers enough of what he was in life to believe that somehow he must protect the others. These surviving memories, as much as his strength of will, has elevated him to a position of leadership amongst the ghosts. While Crovus appears to be very rational, he is completely delusional. While he was alive, he was in denial about the fact that he was a psyker and even as he was locked into the holds of a Black Ship, he continued to claim that his captors were wrong. In death, he knows he is dead but believes it is his faith in the Emperor that has kept him here and not his psychic ability, which he has all but forgotten about. Crovus also devoutly believes he is doing the Emperor's will beyond the grave in keeping these psykers in line. He is well aware of his death and has a habit of always talking in the past tense.

As a Warp Ghost, Crovus has no profile. However, the GM can feel free to give him Skills and Talents that would seem appropriate should the need arise.

ISHTAN VOGEL

Ishtan Vogel was, in life, a valued member of the Inquisition. A powerful psyker and widely read scholar, his contributions to Adorjin's cases allowed her to triumph many times where she otherwise may have fallen. At heart, Vogel still blames himself for not preparing his mistress enough for her final struggle with her nemesis. He masks his doubts under a flippant attitude. Vogel appears to be a slight man wearing a long overcoat and he frequently bears a wry smile. Vogel's psychic abilities still function to a certain degree, though certainly in a more limited fashion than they did in life. Vogel has, indeed, gone slightly crazy with the years though he masks it well. The adventure presumes that he does his best to help the Acolytes. However, if you prefer, Vogel may, in a moment of weakness, attempt to possess one of the PCs in order to escape the bonds of the *Twilight* in their flesh.

Vogel is a reflection of your player's Acolytes, for their fate may one day be similar to his. A breed apart even in death, Vogel's fellow spirits pull back as he passes, fearful of what he still represents. They are aware, to a certain extent, of his connection to the Inquisition and have always treated him at an arm's length respect—much like the PCs will find themselves treated in time. Vogel's knowledge has helped keep many of the spirits from being taken by Warp Beasts, Dark Eldar and other enemies in the past, which is why Crovus cannot truly move directly against him as the rest of the spirits deem him a hero (of sorts).

As a Warp Ghost, Vogel has no profile however, the GM can feel free to give him Skills and Talents that would seem appropriate should the need arise. It is also possible that Vogel may make use of some Minor Psychic Powers (for example; Fearful Aura, Flash Bang, Spasm and Touch of Madness—without needing to make a Power Roll) at the GM discretion.

Vogel will explain the bulk of Adorjin's story to the PCs, noting that she was attacked while a young girl and possessed by the Daemonic entity Nekaybraianon, which she finally managed to kill after a lifetime spent hunting it, though it slew her in turn. The Daemon's psychic death throes killed the psyker cargo and crew of the ship as well as throwing it out of realspace. Some time after, warp entities found the remaining survivors and began picking them off. They learned to fight, after a fashion, but then the xenos shadow raiders came—Dark Eldar.

"Our numbers have dwindled since then as they have hunted us for sport; I literally watched them tear a girl apart once and feast upon her spirit. The shadow raiders terrified the others and Crovus used that fear to manipulate them, telling them that they are being punished for the sin of being psychic and that their faith in the Emperor is being tested. He has used his influence to drag us all back towards Scintilla, the world from which so many of them came, promising them that they will at last be free of their tormentors. The corsairs have grown bolder, their attacks more probing as if they're searching for something. I know they are. I know what they're searching for and the others will no longer fight to stop them. That's why I sent the signal, using Adorjin's call sign. I can't defeat them alone and they must not have it... If the Navy will soon destroy this hulk, then mark my words—they are coming. I would guess they know you're here, which means none of you will be allowed to leave alive."

Vogel falls silent, shaking his head. If one of the Acolytes asks if Vogel was referring to the Luminous Reproach (as the reason for "shadow raiders" being on-board the *Twilight*), Vogel will look at them in surprise saying:

"The Luminous? It's with Adorjin, but why? You've just come for the blade? That's why you're here? Then you don't know, do you? The Dark Eldar aren't here for any blade, they want her book, Adorjin's book. Justicar Volze of the Grey Knights entrusted Adorjin with their highest honour, a copy of the Liber Daemonica. It holds much that the Ordo Malleus and the Grey Knights know of the Daemonic and it will be phenomenally dangerous in the wrong hands."

Suspicious Acolytes may make a **Routine (+20) Scrutiny Test** to decide if Trempan is telling the truth. Any success will confirm Trempan is being honest and that he is surprised the Acolytes know nothing of the *Liber Daemonica*.

While the Acolytes are taking this in, one of them may ask why Vogel didn't destroy the book?

"I can't destroy the book. It's warded against psychic and Daemonic influence. Besides, such lore has a life of its own, a way of surviving against the odds. I could've tried to seal it in the hold, but my heart tells me it would've found a way into the hands of the xenos if it could. Will you help me? Will you take the book from here?"

The Acolytes will doubtless think that's a fantastic idea, but will rightfully wonder how they're going to get away with that. Vogel grins:

"You say that the Navy will level this place? I suspect that the hulk will swiftly come apart as they bombard it. There are a series of escape pods along the upper deck. We can hold off the Dark Eldar as long as we can and, at the last instant, you jettison out of the ruins of this disintegrating hulk. It's a fool's chance, but you wouldn't be with the Inquisition if you were smart or sane. Certainly no worse than trying to shoot your way past their strike teams and dozens of hounds."

At face value Vogel's plan is risky. GMs should make it clear that to get out of this the Acolytes are going to have to take the risk. Your players may suggest some equally improbable escape plans. If their plan sounds even vaguely plausible, let them go for it. After all, such plans are the heart and soul of a good action adventure.

If any of the Acolytes ask about the Inquisitor, Vogel shakes his head sadly, *"Adorjin was at point-blank range when the Daemon was destroyed. Her spirit was annihilated."* He smiles slightly, *"You'll see soon enough."* Depending on the level of knowledge of the Inquisition's workings within your campaign, the Acolytes

may also have to ask who the Grey Knights are, to which Vogel would respond, *"Awe inspiring holy warriors. They bring the divine retribution of the Emperor to the foul beasts of the warp. Each warrior a shining beacon of faith and purity against the foes of Ordo Malleus."*

The Acolytes may or may not be willing to go along with all that Vogel has said—but it has all been true so far. He's also right: the Kabal of Crimson Woes will be coming for the book, and soon too. The Acolytes have an uncertain amount of time left until detonation, meaning they are likely long beyond the point of being able to return to the Helios—not that the Warp Beasts roaming the space hulk would've let them by without a fight. Still, the Acolytes have been pushed about quite a bit at this point and they may decide they want to flee—Trempan will state that his team will not be accompanying them, but they are free to go if they wish. In fact, the group will find escape to be relatively easy—the Dark Eldar are preparing to raid the holds of the Black Ship and the Warp Beasts have more or less moved on for the time being. A group that moves at best possible speed would reach the Helios just as the Navy was opening up on the *Twilight*.

Presuming that the Acolytes agree, at least in part, with his proposal, Vogel leads all present down to the thirteenth hold of the Black Ship, where Adorjin's body awaits.

VOX CODE

Clever Acolytes may think to ask how Vogel managed to send a signal through the distortion surrounding the *Twilight*. Vogel explains that he used some of the bridge equipment of the Black Ship, which was designed by artisans of the Adeptus Mechanicus in conjunction with powerful psykers of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica. He has no idea how it works, though he knows that there is little power left in it, hence his infrequent messages. If the Acolytes agree to help him, Vogel says they'll send Battlefleet Calixis a short message asking them to search for escape pods—small hope, but better than none at all.



THE LUMINOUS REPROACH

The *Luminous Reproach* is an elegantly engraved power sword crafted by a brilliant weapon-smith with artistry now lost to mankind, and blessed by one of the most celebrated Ecclesiarchs in the history of the Imperium. The sword adds +10 to its wielder's chance to hit—it has a Damage of 1d10+8 (E), a Penetration of 8 and has the Balanced and Power Field qualities. It counts as a holy weapon. When used in combat against Daemons, the wielder can re-roll one missed attack per Round exactly as if he or she had spent a Fate Point. The results of re-rolls are final—a Fate Point cannot be used to get a second re-roll, though one could be used to re-roll a second missed attack.

THE TRUE HEART OF THE TWILIGHT

The Black Ships of the Inquisition each have thirteen cavernous holds. It was in the final hold of the ship that the Daemonhunter Adorjin confronted her lifelong adversary and met her end. Vogel leads the Acolytes to the furthest end of the long spinal corridor that runs the length of the ship and down to a hold sealed by layers of melting frost. Vogel brings the Acolytes to the edge of the door and points a finger into the darkness beyond.

As you walk into the sombre darkness of the hold, you can see a single point of light shining in the distance, hovering some fifteen feet in the air. As you slowly approach, the light gathers in strength, a solitary star burning in the darkness. A scent wafts over you, noticeable even in the chilled air, a hint of musk, tinged with putrescence, like a perfume that's decayed. And then your lights fall upon it and it takes all of your will not to run screaming from the hold. The thing stretches out across the floor, its true dimensions thankfully lost under layers of hoarfrost. You see tentacles and scales, eyeballs and gaping mouths lined with jagged fangs. It is an abomination. At the centre of the mass, lifted up above the grotesque body, a woman encased in power armour holds the burning star in a two fisted grip, thrusting her sword downward into the heart of the Daemon. Even in death, the Daemonhunter is still grappling with her foe. Adorjin, too, is coated in ice, but you can see a defiant snarl frozen across her countenance that time has never touched.

Having finally arrived at their goal, one or more of the Acolytes may very well be loath to take the *Luminous Reproach*—which can make for some fine roleplay as the characters argue about duty versus desecration. If any of Trempan's group is present, they'll join in with their own views on the subject. Some of the Acolytes present may also suspect that the daemon is not truly dead and that removing the blade may be a very, very bad idea. It is exceedingly unlikely that any present has the **Forbidden Lore (Daemonology)** skill but if they do, taking a Challenging Test can tell them about the probable repercussions of removing the blade. Failure indicates deep uncertainty, but any level of success will tell them that Nekaybraianon is dead—the force of the psychic blast that killed

the entire crew and cargo of the Black Ship could not have been generated by anything less. Psychic characters will feel nothing from either corpse, as if the strength of their deaths has completely blasted the area clean of warp residue. The only anomaly is a distinct psychic void near Adorjin's body...

Vogel gives the Acolytes as long as they need to compose themselves before reluctantly saying, *"That is obviously the Luminous... The book is bound in chains and fastened to her waist. There is a clasp near her belt buckle that must be turned in order to release it and free the book."*

Climbing up onto the back of a Daemon's corpse to hack the ice away from a Daemonhunter's body in order to claim the sacred book (and blade) requires a **Frightening (-10) Fear Test**. In addition to any other results caused by a failed Test, failure means that the Acolyte will not approach the frozen corpse. If any of the PC Acolytes think to appease Adorjin's spirit first, by giving a prayer or invoking the Emperor's Blessing, that character automatically succeeds at the Test. The first player to suggest such a course of action should be awarded a 30 xp bonus. If Trempan's group is present, they'll look with great respect upon the individual that retrieves the blade and the book. Several disturbing minutes later, the book and blade are free. Adorjin's copy of the *Liber Daemonica* is stamped with the symbol of Ordo Malleus and bound with chains of black adamantine.

If the Acolytes refuse to take the book, then Vogel begs them to destroy it on the spot. If Sergeant Forden is still with the group, he will immediately declare his willingness to act and will step forward to do so. The second he gets his hands on the book, Forden will toss several hallucination grenades amidst the PCs and his former allies—he'll then attempt to flee at high speed, killing anyone that gets in his way, as he tries to get back to his team's vessel. Proximity to a Daemon's corpse should make for some interesting hallucinations.

Forden fights to the death if cornered. If any of his former companions are alive at this point, they'll be at a loss for his behaviour. Ransacking his body will turn up (with a successful **Challenging Search Test**) a well-hidden symbol of the Serrated Query sewn into the inside lining of his shirt. If the PCs agree to take the book, Forden will wait to make his move.

After claiming whatever they've decided to take from the hold, Vogel takes the Acolytes back towards the centre of the ship, saying, *"There is a large crack along the hull near the seventh hold, that is where the corsairs are most likely to attack from. Fortunately, the wards of the ship still prevent their bounds*



from accompanying them or I think we would have been overrun long since."

The Acolytes have approximately an hour to prepare a suitable "welcome" for the Dark Eldar. However, as their chronos have completely failed due to the strange influence of the *Twilight*, they may believe that they have less than an hour until the *Twilight's* final reckoning. Given the possible confusion over time, the Acolytes might consider making a break for it. Since you don't want them to miss out on the fight, you could have Vogel appeal to their sense of duty in helping him destroy the Dark Eldar rather than letting them escape. Of course if that doesn't motivate the PCs, tell them that the escape pods require time to "prep" (as they have lain dormant for so long).

The crack that Vogel mentioned is a massive wound along the side of the hull running for over a hundred feet. The various forces at work in the space hulk have ruptured the Black Ship, causing it to partially split open. Several passageways can be discerned beyond. If the Acolytes ask which corridor Vogel thinks the xenos will come from, he shakes his head and says, "They won't come from within the hulk, but from

the warp itself. This is just the area where they can most easily breach realspace."

As the Acolytes lay their traps within the sixth and seventh holds, a light rain begins to fall, as the ice that coats the hull begins to evaporate. Vogel doesn't know what is causing the ice to melt but assumes it has something to do with the Dark Eldar's disturbance of the warp. The escape pods that the Acolytes will need are along the upper decks, near the front cabin. After the PCs have an idea of the layout of the ship and what they intend to do, Vogel will call their attention to a small device that appears from the shadows in a far corner of one of the holds. With a gesture, Vogel telekinetically yanks it out of the darkness and smashes the small crystalline thing to the floor of the hold. He looks about at the Acolytes and grimly states, "They're coming."

If the Acolytes take the time to have a closer look at the small crystalline device, they will see that it is of obvious xenos design. It appears to be a small oval-shaped object, with short spines jutting-out in random directions. A successful **Routine (+20) Tech-Use Test** will note that the internal workings bear no resemblance to those employed by Serrated Query technology. A **Challenging Forbidden Lore (Xenos) Test** will confirm that the device is known to be used by the Dark Eldar.

THE LIBER DAEMONICA

The *Liber Daemonica* is a very dangerous book, it holds secret and forbidden knowledge that can twists and destroy weak minds. The Acolytes are better off leaving it sealed shut, something that Vogel will point out. However, one or more Acolytes may wish to look inside. While the book appears to be a normal, opening it will reveal a series of flickering paper-thin screens that contain interactive information that can be brought to focus or enlarged. Actively consulting the *Liber Daemonica* gives a **+30 Bonus to any Tests involving the Forbidden Lores (Daemonology and Warp)**. Anyone who consults the book acquires 1 Corruption Point each time they take a Test that takes advantage of this bonus. The book contains the sacred rites of battle for the Grey Knights. Page after page discusses tactics and how to fight the denizens of the immaterium, as well as, listing the True Names of a great many Daemonic entities. The book pulls no punches; it includes an extensive discourse of when to terminate compromised allies and a whole chapter discussing the moral implications and appropriate use of Ex-terminatus.

IN THE DARK

While the Acolytes may feel that they're ready for anything, they're likely to be fairly surprised by the Dark Eldar's first overture. A sound resembling a high-pitched whine begins pulsing throughout the guts of the ship. At the centre of the seventh hold, a hole opens in the fabric of realspace emitting a greenish-black light from elsewhere for a moment before ejecting a small round device. The rupture swiftly closes behind the orb as it hovers slowly across the room. A perfect hologram, cast without any hint of distortion, projects a being's full body image from the xenos device. The corsair is dreadful to behold. His gaunt frame is encased in a black body glove covered with pale runes formed from carved bone and a variety of strange implements, including a fair number of oddly shaped blades hang from his waist. His skin is an ashy white, marked at random and asymmetrical points with dark blue-grey tattoos. His eyes are dark pits, without discernible whites. When he deigns to speak, his teeth are sharp and appear to be made of a chrome-like material. With a disturbing smile, he intones in a disquieting pleasant voice:

"Greetings. Are there any here who can treat with me?"

If any of the Acolytes show themselves or speak, he turns to address them and it seems obvious that he can somehow see through the hologram projection. Presuming he is answered, he continues:

"Allow me to introduce myself, I am Akirvas, principle Truth Seeker of the Kabal of Crimson Woes. Let us not mince words, for your time is fairly short, is it not mon-keigh? Your lives do not matter to us in the slightest, whether you live or die is of no consequence. Therefore, we have no objections to letting you go, provided you let us inspect your possessions as you leave and allow us to take what we wish."

Regardless of what the Acolytes say or do, Akirvas remains polite. Once further speech seems irrelevant, Akirvas shrugs, "So be it." The hologram explodes in a shower of flechettes that will cause **1d10+6 (R) Damage** to everyone in the open who doesn't make a **successful Difficult (-10) Agility Test or Challenging Dodge Test**.

A minute passes before the whine starts again, only this time it is deep and shakes the very walls of the Black Ship. Several holes open in realspace as the Dark Eldar raiders leap out of

THE STRIKE FORCE OF THE KABAL OF CRIMSON WOES

AKIRVAS

Haemonculi are foul and twisted beings, Dark Eldar who have abandoned all pursuits other than perfecting the affliction of pain and death, usually via complex forms of torture. Akirvas is no different from most of his kind, though he shows a great deal more willingness to work with other (lesser) species than most of his ilk. Akirvas acts as a raider for hire and has frequently assisted the Serrated Query. His strike force has come to the *Twilight* at the Query's behest in order to acquire the *Liber Daemonica* for them. Akirvas has no intentions of dying this day and will certainly return to plague the Acolytes for years to come.

Akirvas bears a vicious weapon known as a destructor. The destructor sprays blasts of a powerful acid capable of melting through most armour in seconds. He fights two handed with the destructor in one hand and a nasty looking blade in the other.

LITHORG & MARBROSA

These are hideous creatures created by Akirvas. Whatever they once were has long since been lost, as the Haemonculus has performed many experiments on them. They are effectively living killing machines, with little more sentience than a combat servitor. They feel no pain of any kind.

CRIMSON WOE RAIDERS

These Dark Eldar foot troops are clad in light armour and wield splinter rifles. Their movements are swift and sure, though they have a distinct fear of dying that renders them less effective in combat than they could be. There will be a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 in Akirvas' force (the number should be determined by the GM, based upon the number and level of experience of the Acolytes).

Profiles for all of the strike force can be found on **pages 87–88**.



The 13 Holds of the Black Ship



Side Elevation

□ = 100x100 Metres



Plan

Space Hulk Twilight
Cross-section 10AA7-5KK



The Black Ship



1000 Rec 1000 1571

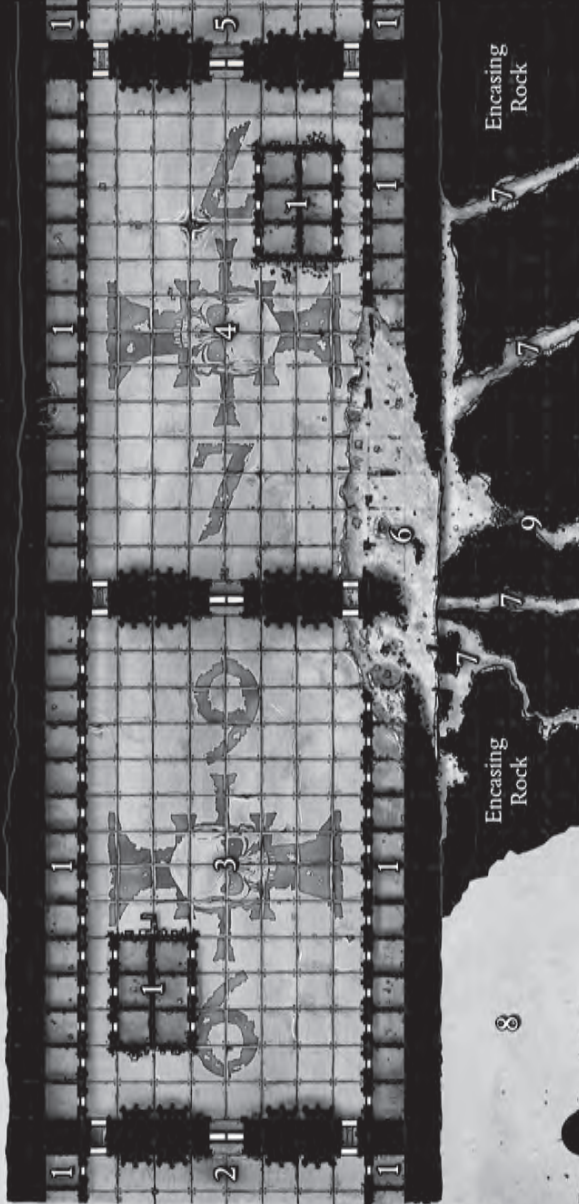
145-1/4 (S/H)
SPACE HULK TWILIGHT
CARTOPICT CC-63/647 XII

THE BLACK SHIP

Encasing Rock

□ = 10x10 Metres

Holds 6 and 7



Encasing Rock

Encasing Rock

Key

- 1 = Cell Block
- 2 = Hold 5
- 3 = Hold 6
- 4 = Hold 7
- 5 = Hold 8

- 6 = Massive Crack in the Hull
- 7 = Passageway back to the Space Hulk
- 8 = Empty space
- 9 = Blocked Passageway

II: SHADES ON TWILIGHT

WE'LL BE BACK, MON-KEIGH!

The adventure presumes that Akirvas escapes, returning to torment your Acolytes in future adventures of your own devising. However, the Acolytes may come up with a plan allowing them to kill or capture the Haemonculus before he manages to flee. Not to worry, that just gives the Kabal of Crimson Woes a wonderful excuse for future retribution and revenge. The whole fight is being recorded and relayed back to their base of operations.

portals from their twisted portion of the Eldar's ancient webway into the melting ice-rain that falls from the ceiling within the seventh hold of the Black Ship. The big climatic fight of *Shades On Twilight* is a chaotic affair, ranging throughout the two holds the Acolytes have prepared. As the fight begins, the darkness doesn't impede the Dark Eldar as they use helmets that grant them night vision, but the hulk's malignant influence on advanced technologies will have 1d5 of the raiders going blind 1d5 Rounds into the fight.

Since the Acolytes have had time to get ready, encourage your players to come up with various traps to help defend against or defeat the Dark Eldar. The exact contents of the ship have been left vague in order to let their imaginations (and yours) fill in the area. For example, the Acolytes can make deadfalls by prying up the decking and then replacing the floor so it will cave-in (an Opposed Test between the Acolyte's Intelligence and the Dark Eldar's Awareness to determine if they are successful). Alternatively a Tech-priest Acolyte could electrify a section of bulkhead by re-wiring ancient wires (**successful Tech-Use Test**) and then manoeuvre their foe into contact, leaving them to dance and convulse as they are cooked. Always err on the side of entertainment and cool, imaginative ideas should always be rewarded.

If the Dark Eldar corsairs ever manage to specifically locate the *Liber Daemonica*, they will immediately turn all their efforts towards capturing it. Should they succeed, their troops immediately begin a fighting withdrawal. Vogel assists the characters by using his Psychic Powers on a few of the raiders, snapping bones and pulping flesh, though he makes a point of staying far away from the Haemonculus for fear of being consumed. Trempan's team fights alongside the PCs,

living or dying at your whim—though if he is still alive, Sergeant Forden will have made a point of fighting near the Acolyte carrying the *Liber Daemonica*. At a crucial moment in the battle, he will attempt to seize the book and run towards the Haemonculus. As he does so, he will pull the hidden symbol of the Serrated Query from his clothes to show the corsair leader. Akirvas will immediately seize Forden's arm and flee to the webway with him. It will take no more than two Rounds for them to reach the nearest portal.

Choose a moment in the fight when the Acolytes look like they are about to be all but overrun. They all hear the distinct sound of a bolt pistol going off and several of the corsairs explode in magnificent fashion, their vital fluids spraying over a wide area. "*For the Emperor!*" roars the inhumanly loud voice of Brother-Sergeant Agamorr as he enters the *Twilight's* seventh hold. The Space Marine's armour is a wreck, deeply scored with claws and leaking fluids from many places. His helmet has been sheered away along with his right eye and a small portion of his skull. His thunderhammer is completely coated in alien gore and drips ichor. He immediately moves to brace the Acolytes's line, or if it seems a better idea, leaps into the midst of a group of raiders, hammer whirring as he does so. In a spare moment between fights, the Brother-Sergeant responds to any number of questions that the Acolytes may have with a slight smile and a simple, "*It's been a good day.*"

Gauge the fight by how many significant injuries have been doled out on both sides. After several Acolytes have been severely wounded, or the majority of the NPCs have been taken out, the hold of the ship unexpectedly shifts ten feet to the right, throwing everyone and everything forcefully sideways.

The destruction of the *Twilight* has begun.



ACOLYTES, WE ARE LEAVING!

Battlefleet Calixis has begun the bombardment of the *Twilight* right on schedule. The space hulk is now coming apart at the seams as the batteries of the Imperial Navy lay waste to it. The corsairs immediately begin retreating via their webway portals. Akirvas will depart with a bow.

Brother-Sergeant Agamorr helps to carry any unconscious or heavily injured Acolytes up the spiralling stairs to the upper decks as the Black Ship continues to shudder and shake. The Acolytes, the Space Marine and any surviving members of Trempan's team are swiftly loaded into cramped escape pods along the upper deck of the ship. Vogel watches as the doors seal. A psyker character automatically feels the massive build up of psychic energy about their pods as the ghost focuses his will upon them. All conscious Acolytes hear a whisper in their minds "*The Emperor protects,*" before they are thrust from the collapsing space hulk on a psychic bow wave. Behind them, the *Twilight* crumples, smashed to pieces by the cruisers of the Imperial Navy.

AFTERMATH

Much, obviously, depends on the success or failure of the Acolytes's actions. Surviving members of Trempan's team are likely well

disposed towards the PCs and may become possible future allies, as will the valiant Brother-Sergeant. There are many that would say the friendship of an Adeptus Astartes is priceless. If the Acolytes succeeded at their mission, Inquisitor Vaarak is pleased with them. If they retrieved both the blade and the *Liber Daemonica*, he is ecstatic. Those who truly held their own against the Warp Beasts will have proven that they have the mettle to be allowed to learn more of Ordo Malleus and the Grey Knights—you may wish to allow them an Elite Advance in order to take on the study of **Forbidden Lore (Daemonology) or Forbidden Lore (Warp)** regardless of their Career Path. The Luminous Reproach now resides with the Tyrantine Cabal, and possibly within the grasp of a pious Acolyte who has dedicated their life to swordplay...

Acolytes who consider keeping the *Liber Daemonica* and the Luminous Reproach for themselves will find the task difficult, as Brother-Sergeant Agamorr will "notice" the items at the first opportunity. Equally, Inquisitor Vaarak will easily spot if an Acolyte is telling a lie about the whereabouts of the sword or book—something he will definitely "frown" upon...

The characters have acquired a new enemy in the form of the Kabal of Crimson Woes. They will have also, at this point, well and truly drawn the attention of the Serrated Query when word of what has occurred gets back to them. If the *Liber Daemonica* escaped with the corsairs (or Forden), it will turn up once again in Baron Hopes, the final adventure in this book, otherwise, it returns to the secretive order of Adeptus Astartes from whence it came.

EXPERIENCE AWARDS

In addition to the Experience Point awards noted in the text, any Acolyte that makes it off the *Twilight* should be awarded 1,000 xp.

Managing to deal amicably with the Warp Ghosts is worth another 200 xp for each Acolyte.

Unmasking the traitor Forden before he makes his play is worth 150 xp.

Acolytes that participated in the death of the Dark Eldar Akirvas should receive another 250 xp.



NPCs

Here you will find the profiles for each of the prominent NPCs presented in this scenario.

BROTHER-SERGEANT AGAMORR

Brother-Sergeant Agamorr Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
57	54	⁽¹⁰⁾ 68	⁽⁸⁾ 45	45	37	44	53	33

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Wounds: 25

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Interrogation (WP) +10, Scholastic Lore (Judgement) (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Climb (S), Command (Fel) +20, Scholastic Lore (The Astartes) (Int) +20, Medicae (Int), Intimidate (S), Survival (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Bolt), Disarm, Melee Weapon Training (Power), Pistol Training (Bolt), Takedown, Air of Authority, Armour of Contempt, Combat Master, Ambidextrous, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ballistic), Die Hard, True Grit, Fearless, Furious Assault, Hatred (Xenos), Swift Attack, Lightning Attack, Mighty Shot.

Traits: Unnatural Strength (×2), Unnatural Toughness (×2).

Armour: Astartes power armour (Head 10, Arms 11, Body 12, Legs 11). Note the armour provides +20 to Agamorr's Strength (+2 SB) and increases his size to Hulking.

Weapons: Astartes bolt pistol (35m; S/2/-; 2d10+2 X; Pen 5; Clip 10; Rld Full), Astartes thunderhammer (1d10+17 E; Pen 6; Shocking, Power Field, Unwieldy).

Gear: Micro-bead, photo visor, respirator, 6 bolt pistol magazines.

WARP BEASTS

Warp Beasts Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
42	10	41	43	45	15	34	33	10

Movement: 8/16/24/48

Wounds: 14

Skills: Concealment (Ag) +20, Silent Move (Ag) +20.

Talents: Berserk Charge.

Traits: Dark Sight, Daemonic, Fear 2 (Frightening), Daemonic Presence[†], Natural Weapons (Claws and Fangs), Warp Weapons, Quadruped, From Beyond, Warp Instability.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Claws and fangs (1d10+4; Warp Weapon).

Gear: None.

[†]**Daemonic Presence:** all those within a 30 metre area of a Warp Beast will hear the sounds of faint whimpering and crying; shadows will grow and deepen, and the smell of ozone will be palpable. Everyone within this area is will suffer -10 to Willpower Tests.

Special Rule: Out of the Corner of Your Eye: every time a Warp Beast is in a position to be seen by a character (other than when they are in close combat with it), they must make a Routine (+10) Willpower Test or only catch a "fleeting glimpse" of it—rendering the creature effectively invisible. **Note:** the Warp Beast's Daemonic Presence will modify a character's Willpower for this Test.

LARGE WARP BEASTS

Large Warp Beasts Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	10	51	43	45	15	34	33	10

Movement: 8/16/24/48

Wounds: 16

Skills: Concealment (Ag) +20, Silent Move (Ag) +20.

Talents: Berserk Charge.

Traits: Dark Sight, Daemonic, Fear 2 (Frightening), Daemonic Presence[†], Natural Weapons (Claws and Fangs), Warp Weapons, Quadruped, From Beyond, Warp Instability.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Claws and fangs (1d10+5; Warp Weapon).

Gear: None.

[†]**Daemonic Presence:** all those within a 30 metre area of a Warp Beast will hear the sounds of faint whimpering and crying; shadows will grow and deepen, and the smell of ozone will be palpable. Everyone within this area is will suffer -10 to Willpower Tests.

Special Rule: Out of the Corner of Your Eye: every time a Warp Beast is in a position to be seen by a character (other than when they are in close combat with it), they must make a Routine (+10) Willpower Test or only catch a "fleeting glimpse" of it — rendering the creature effectively invisible. **Note:** the Warp Beast's Daemonic Presence will modify a character's Willpower for this Test.

KETSERAR

Ketserar Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
38	38	32	31	⁽⁸⁾ 45	35	44	33	21

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 12

Skills: Awareness (Per), Forbidden Lore (Dark Eldar) (Int), Interrogation (WP) +10, Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, Dark Eldar) (Int), Wrangling (Int) +10, Concealment (Ag) +10, Silent Move (Ag) +10, Tracking (Int) +10.

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP, Exotic), Fearless, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Shock, Power), Pistol Training (Las, SP, Exotic), Unnatural Agility (×2).

Armour: Xeno mesh (Arms 4, Body 4, Legs 4).

Weapons: Splinter pistol (50m; S/3/6; 1d10 R; Pen 3; Clip 120; Rld 2Full; Hail of Splinters), mono blade (1d10+3 R; Pen 2; Balanced), terrorfex (see sidebar).

Gear: spare clip for splinter pistol, warp whistle.

ENGINESEER MOLOCHAN

Enginseer Molochan Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
32	31	32	37	30	41	33	35	21

Movement: 3/6/9/18**Wounds:** 12

Skills: Awareness (Per), Chem-Use (Int), Common Lore (Tech) (Int), Drive (Ground Vehicle) (Ag), Logic (Int) +10, Pilot (Civilian Craft) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Imperial Creed) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Secret Tongue (Tech) (Int) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +10.

Talents: Binary Chatter, Chem Geld, Electrical Succour, Energy Cache, Gun Blessing, Luminem Charge, Meditation, Melee Weapon Training (Chain, Power, Primitive), Pistol Training (Bolt, Las, Plasma, SP), Mechadendrite Use (Optical).

Armour: Flak cloak (Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3).

Weapons: Chain axe (1d10+7 R; Pen 2; Tearing), laspistol (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Rld Full; Reliable).

Gear: Basic MIU interface, auger arrays, optical mechadendrite, tools, respirator, data-slate, personal cogitator, 2 laspistol clips, micro-bead.

LADY D

Lady D Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
33	37	32	27	45	32	33	35	45

Movement: 4/8/12/24**Wounds:** 12

Skills: Awareness (Per) +10, Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Common Lore (Underworld) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag) +10, Drive (Ground Vehicle) (Ag), Inquiry (Fel), Security (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Carouse (T), Climb (S), Evaluate (Int), Gamble (Per).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (SP), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (Las, SP), Rapid Reaction, Sprint, Catfall.

Armour: Mesh vest (Body 4).

Weapons: Las pistol (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Rld Full, Reliable), knife (1d5+3 R, Primitive), pump-action shotgun (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 8; Rld 2Full; Scatter).

Gear: Trendy threads, 3 las pistol charge packs, cameleoline cloak, filtration plugs, pack of lho-sticks, micro-bead, 10 shotgun shells.

CALCULUS-LOGI TREMPAN

Calculus-Logi Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
33	40	32	35	31	55	44	43	33

Movement: 3/6/9/18**Wounds:** 11

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int),

Interrogation (WP) +10, Scholastic Lore (Judgement) (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Forbidden Lore (Inquisition) (Int), Command (Fel), Inquiry (Fel) +10.

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (Las, SP), Iron Discipline, Total Recall.

Armour: Enforcer light carapace (Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5).

Weapons: Hand cannon (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Rld 2Full).

Gear: Micro-bead, photo visor, respirator, 20 bullets.

SERGEANT FORDEN

Sergeant Forden Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	37	36	35	36	31	35	30	31

Movement: 3/6/9/18**Wounds:** 14

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Interrogation (WP), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (Las, SP), Swift Attack.

Armour: Guard flak armour (Head 4, Arms 4, Body 4, Legs 4).

Weapons: Autogun with man-stopper rounds (90m; S/3/10; 1d10+3 I; Pen 3; Clip 30; Rld Full), Stub automatic with dumdums (30m; S/3/-; 1d10+5 I; Pen 0; Clip 9; Rld Full; AP counts double).

Gear: Uniform, 2 autogun clips, micro-bead, respirator, photo-visor.

AKIRVAS

Akirvas Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
58	49	38	47	55 ⁽¹⁰⁾	45	34	43	31

Movement: 5/10/15/30;**Wounds:** 16

Skills: Awareness (Per), Forbidden Lore (Dark Eldar) (Int) +10, Interrogation (WP) +20, Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic, Dark Eldar) (Int), Concealment (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Chem-Use (Int), Deceive (Fel), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Ambidextrous, Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP, Exotic), Blademaster, Crippling Strike, Disarm, Fearless, Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Power, Exotic), Pistol Training (Las, SP, Exotic), Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ballistic), Iron Discipline, Unnatural Agility (×2).

Armour: Full xeno mesh (Head 4, Arms 4, Body 4, Legs 4).

Weapons: Mono blade (1d10+3 R; Pen 2, Balanced), destructor (10m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 E; Pen 1d10; Clip 1; Rld 3Full; Flame, Toxic (see Corsair Weapons on page 89).

Gear: Various despicable implements of torture.

LITHORG & MARBROSA

Lithorg & Marbrosa Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
28	18	48	⁽⁸⁾ 45	25	15	24	23	10

Movement: 2/4/6/12**Skills:** None.**Talents:** Fearless.**Traits:** Natural Weapons (Claws), Unnatural Toughness (×2).**Armour:** None.**Weapons:** Claws (1d10+4; Primitive).**Gear:** None.**Wounds:** 18

CRIMSON WOE RAIDERS

Crimson Woe Raiders Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
42	46	31	32	⁽⁸⁾ 45	33	37	31	27

Movement: 4/8/12/24**Wounds:** 12**Skills:** Concealment (Ag), Silent Move (Ag), Common Lore (Dark Eldar) (Int) +10, Speak Language (Dark Eldar) (Int).**Talents:** Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP, Exotic), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (Las, SP, Exotic), Unnatural Agility (×2).**Armour:** Xeno mesh (Arms 4, Body 4, Legs 4).**Weapons:** Splinter rifle (80m; S/3/10; 1d10+1 R; Pen 3; Clip 200; Rld 2Full; Hail of Splinters), mono blade (1d10+3 R; Pen 2, Balanced).**Gear:** 2 spare splinter rifle clips.

CORSAIR WEAPONS

The Dark Eldar Corsairs use an array of vicious weapons designed as much for their ability to cause pain as slay their enemies.

SPLINTER WEAPONS



These elegantly barbed and bladed weapons use gravitic force to hurl tiny splinters of diamond-hard crystal that can easily penetrate armour, lacerate flesh and cause agonising wounds. The weapons' crystal ammunition core is sufficient for hundreds of shots and a concentrated spray from a splinter weapon is enough to cut a man to shreds.

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	Wt
Splinter Pistol	Exotic	50m	S/3/6	1d10 R	3	120	2Full	Hail of Splinters	1kg
Splinter Rifle	Exotic	80m	S/3/10	1d10 +1 R	3	200	2Full	Hail of Splinters	2.5kg

Special Rules:

Hail of Splinters: when fired on Fully Automatic, splinter weapons gain the Tearing quality owing to their sheer volume of fire.

Combat Blades: the splinter rifle's fine balance and many bladed attachments means its can also be used as a close combat weapon, counting as a mono spear.

TERRORFEX

A terrorfex is a unique and sinister form of grenade created from twisted wraithbone, it is psychically charged with the fear and agony of the Dark Eldar's many victims. The terrorfex is used just like a normal grenade and has a blast radius of 3 metres. However, instead of inflicting Damage, all those caught in the blast radius must pass a Hard (-20) Willpower Test, and if this is failed, roll on the **Shock Table** (see page 233 of **Dark Heresy**) as per a failed Fear Test.

Armour has no effect on the terrorfex. However, it causes both a Fear effect and a psychic attack and defences and Traits that work against such assaults also affect the terrorfex.

DESTRUCTOR



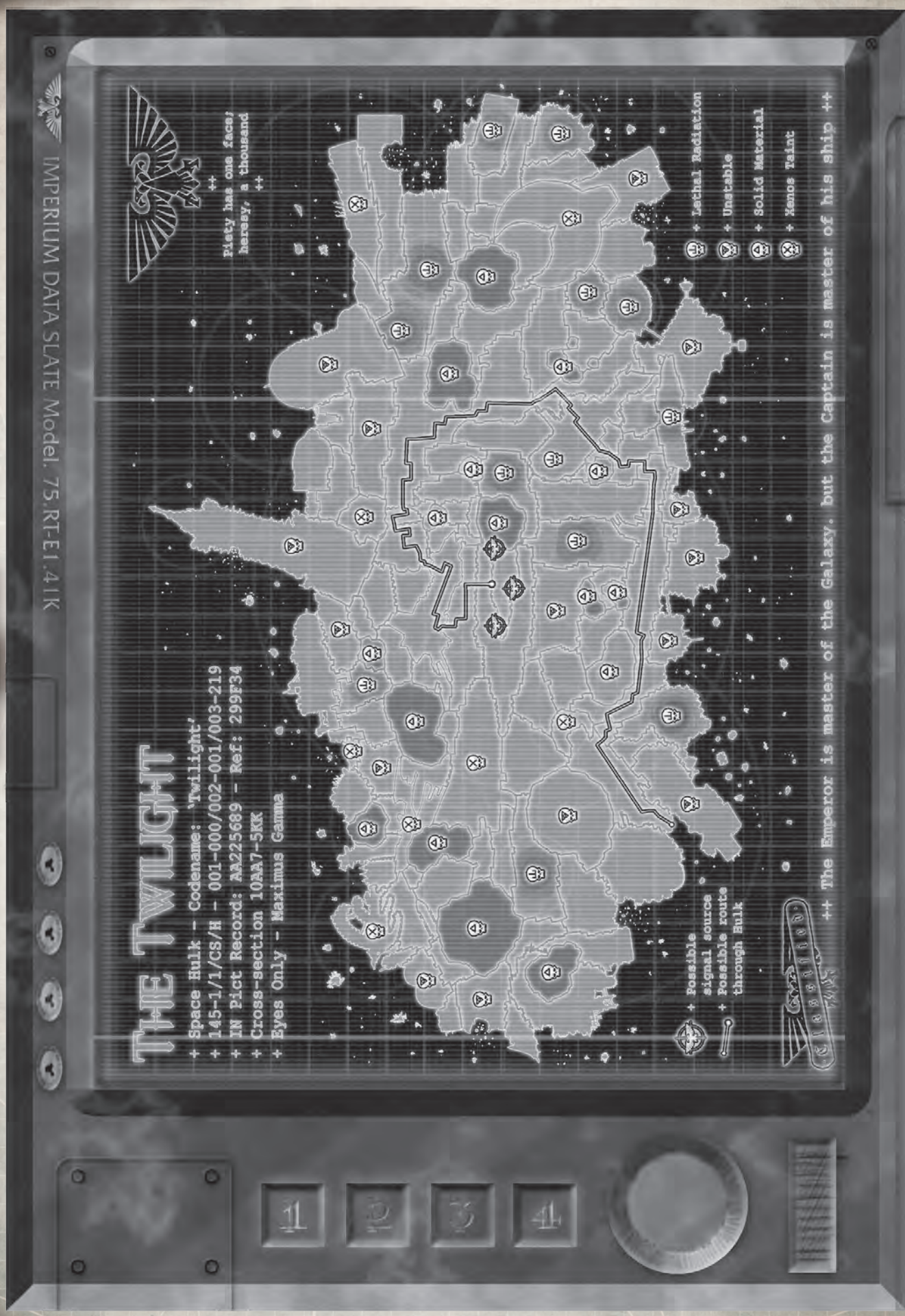
A baroque-looking alien handgun, the destructor shoots a high-pressure jet of corrosive acid and virulent toxins that has been engineered to eat through armour and consume flesh. The homunculi favour such weapons for the horrific injuries they inflict and for the ease with which they dispatch failed experiments.

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Dam	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	Wt
Destructor	Exotic	10m	S/-/-	1D10+4 E	1d10	1	3Full	Flame, Toxic [†]	3kg

Special Rules:

Variable Penetration: the Pen of a destructor is 1d10; this should be rolled for each hit individually. Unless the victim has a sealed helmet or the equivalent, Critical injury caused by a destructor permanently blinds their targets as well as any other Damage or effects they inflict.

†Phage-Toxins: the toxic cocktail of acids and poisons is designed to eat through flesh and creating a necrophagic cascade through cells, destroying organic matter utterly. A living creature wounded by the destructor's effect must pass a Hard (-20) Toughness Test or immediately suffer an additional 2d10 Wounds.



Player Handout 2.1: The *Twilight* Hulk Map Data Slate



BARON HOPES

LINKS IN A CHAIN

•

THE LATE BARON

•

FACTS & SPECULATION

•

WRONG PLACE,
RIGHT TIME

•

THE BROKEN CHAINS

•

SAINT ULBREXIS

•

AFTERMATH

•

NPCs

CHAPTER III: BARON HOPES

"For every serf there is a place, no matter how modest. For every servant there will be comfort in knowing that his sacrifice and strength of purpose shall be rewarded at his journey's end. Now rise up! Rise up and claim your reward!"

— Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis.

What is the price of freedom? How does one measure the cost of a single world's oppression when weighed against the safety and prosperity of a dozen worlds? A hundred worlds? Thousands? The adepts of the Imperium have long since stopped asking such questions, for they invite only madness and corruption by doing so. The cold equations say that some must suffer that the majority may survive, and suffer they do. While the worlds of the Imperium are near countless in number and endless in variation, you would have to look long and hard to find another habitable world as hellishly oppressive as Sepheris Secundus, the mineral powerhouse of the Calixis Sector. The serfs of Sepheris Secundus lead short wretched lives, with each eking out a miserable existence toiling in the innumerable mines of their home world in order that the Segmentum Obscurus be constantly supplied with the rare ores it needs. The majority of the nobles of Sepheris Secundus, who enjoy a relatively luxurious existence, see nothing wrong with working their serfs to death; that is after all what serfs are for. The serfs' condition is enforced by the traditions of a thousand years, which are continuously reinforced by a twisted version of the Imperial Creed, and serfs are an unfortunate necessity on a world that lacks significant Imperial technology.

As bad as the lot of the serfs of Sepheris Secundus is, that of the mutants is worse. The many chemicals and pollutants dredged up by the mine works have resulted in an exceptionally high number of mutations among the planet's populace, but this has never made being a mutant more acceptable. Mutants that aren't killed outright are exiled into the deepest mines and most inhospitable conditions on the planet. There they band with other mutants to quarry such ore as they can while avoiding the many dangers of the deep shafts, in order to exchange the minerals for foodstuffs with less scrupulous serfs. This is the way it has been for untold generations, but there was once a nobleman who believed that it could be otherwise.

His name was Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis, a name that is known throughout the Calixis Sector as belonging to one of the greatest deviants in its recent history. Described as a persuasive orator and ruthless heretic by Imperial scribes, Baron Ulbrexis led a massive serf rebellion supported by countless mutants which killed millions of serfs, thousands of nobles and all but brought mining to a halt across Sepheris Secundus. At last, he was hunted down by the Adeptus Arbites and executed for his crimes.

Or so the official story goes.



LINKS IN A CHAIN

As is always the case with Imperial propaganda, truth is only to be used sparingly, especially when too much of it will point out a grotesque injustice of the Imperium; in this case the inhuman conditions on Sepheris Secundus that the adepts willingly turn a blind eye to, in order to ensure that the colossal tithes to the planet continue to flow without pause. Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis was certainly both a rebel and a heretic, but he was loyal to the Imperium and no true deviant in anything other than his willingness to tolerate mutants. A brilliant and widely-read scholar, Baron Ulbrexis believed that Sepheris Secundus could be dragged out of the dark ages in which it toiled by slowly educating the serfs and by introducing improved mining techniques and technologies licensed from the Adeptus Mechanicus. When his fellow Barons scoffed at his “unrealistic and lofty” ideas, Ulbrexis quietly put them into place within his own fief.

Ulbrexis was the butt of many jokes for several years as he had all but impoverished himself in order to secure the assistance of the Adeptus Mechanicus. His tithes dropped to the bare minimum acceptable to the crown and many disparaging comments were made about “Baron Oreless” whose serfs were popularly thought to live in better conditions than he himself did. The laughter stopped abruptly when he delivered the largest Baronial tithe in Sepheris Secundus history, which he explained as being interest on the years he’d fallen short. The following year was equally impressive. As Ulbrexis’s personal fortunes continued to increase, so did closer scrutiny into his affairs. As a distant relative of Queen Lachryma, many became concerned that he might have had designs on the throne. Agents of the Royal Scourges, the Crown’s own troops, began quietly investigating Baron Ulbrexis. What they found horrified them. Ulbrexis had educated his serfs. Literacy was the norm in his fief and serfs were even allowed regular days off. The brightest serfs had been instructed by the Adeptus Mechanicus in the proper ritualised care and use of a variety of advanced mining machines that had increased the efficiency of Ulbrexis’s mines tenfold. The Scourges fled back to the Queen and her counsellors with what they’d learned.

While nothing Baron Ulbrexis had done actually violated the laws of Sepheris Secundus, his “new way” terrified the conservative old

guard of the planet’s nobility who believed that he meant to overthrow them. They were right to be concerned in the sense that Ulbrexis did indeed wish to bring about a more democratic form of government, though the subtleties of what he truly wanted were beyond the limited comprehension of the bulk of Sepheris Secundus’s nobles. It was enough that he represented such unprecedented change and they demanded that the Queen act. Queen Lachryma ordered her Royal Scourges to remove the Baron and lay his fief to waste, making certain to eradicate any of his “heretically over-educated serfs” that they found in order that they should not corrupt the rest of the populace with their “inappropriate knowledge”.

The Royal Scourges swiftly moved to enact the Queen’s command, but Baron Ulbrexis had received more than just mining equipment from the follows of the Ommissiah. The first wave of royal troops was all but obliterated by Ulbrexis’s well-armed serfs. Knowing the day he had long foreseen had come at last, Ulbrexis ordered a chosen few of his people to scatter across the face of Sepheris Secundus as best they could, hiding in the mines of other Barons, some of whom were secretly sympathetic to Ulbrexis’s aims, while the rest were to stay behind and feign ignorance. The Baron himself went underground with a group of his most loyal followers in order to found an organisation that would eventually come to be known as the Broken Chains. The aim of the Broken Chains was to disrupt the mines of Sepheris Secundus in order to bring harsh Imperial scrutiny to the abusive practices of the planet. While Ulbrexis was under no illusions about the mercy of the Imperium, he hoped that when enough eyes were turned towards Sepheris Secundus, something would have to be done at last. The Broken Chains also made a point of circulating Ulbrexis’s successful mining program amongst his fellow Barons as well as ensuring that the Imperium had a transcript of everything he had accomplished, specifically highlighting how much more productive all of his fief’s mines had been before their destruction. The Broken Chains’ activities were an unmitigated success. Using a combination of advanced technology and cunning planning, they crippled or destroyed dozens of sites, all the while ensuring that their attacks physically harmed no one.

The Broken Chains eluded the efforts of the Barons and the Royal Scourges to stop them for more than a year. Stories were being whispered across the planet of the righteous Baron and his war against the heartless Queen. With the grim reality that they were falling short of their mine quotas looming over their heads, the nobles of Sepheris Secundus grew increasingly desperate.

THE SLOW CREEP OF FEAR

Have you ever watched a horror film and silently yelled at the foolish protagonists for walking into the darkened basement? Have you read a book where characters took risks you knew to be utterly foolhardy? With very few exceptions, the protagonists of believable and convincing horror stories don’t actually know they’re in one until far too late—and so it is with Baron Hopes. At no time should you ever hint to your players that this is a horror story, or give any indication about just how bad things are going to keep getting until their Acolytes are totally coated in zombie pus and mutant blood. By that time, they’ll hopefully have figured it out for themselves.

ORDO INVOLVEMENT

This is a brief rundown on what the various ordos know about the situation and their involvement. Some or most of this information may be available to the players depending on who their Inquisitor is and what their relationship is like with him or her.

ORDO MALLEUS INVOLVEMENT

Assod Morirr has made pacts with Daemons, which is more than enough in itself to justify the interest of Ordo Malleus. He's much worse than that though—Morirr is trying to break down the walls between realspace and the warp within the Harrow. It was at Morirr's request that the Serrated Query hunt down occult texts for him. The copy of the *Liber Daemonica* from the *Shades On Twilight* adventure was destined for (or presently in!) his library. In short, Morirr is indeed exactly what Ordo Malleus exists to fight against.

ORDO HERETICUS INVOLVEMENT

Ordo Hereticus is aware that unusual occurrences have been going on in the mines of the Harrow, nominally far away from their prying eyes. The attacks of the Broken Chains have caused a definite slowing in the production of the mines and, if they aren't stopped, a total cessation may be imminent. More disconcerting by far, though, is the fact that the Broken Chains are a dangerous militant group with access to corrupt unknown xenos technologies nominally led by mutants, a state of affairs that Ordo Hereticus will not let stand. The Broken Chains' ongoing success might give the mutant masses of Sepheris Secundus hope that armed rebellion could be successful—such hopes must be utterly crushed.

ORDO XENOS INVOLVEMENT

Ordo Xenos is particularly interested to discover the source and nature of the weapons being used by the Broken Chains. Reports of bombs causing miners to be "melted in to the very rock," have raised the suspicion that the terrorists have access to xenos technology. Mutants who are being backed by some unknown xenos threat is a situation that cannot and will not be allowed to continue.

Realizing that they had no choice, they reluctantly turned to the local Adeptus Arbites in the hopes that the Arbitrators could succeed where all others had failed. Even had the Arbitrators not turned their attentions towards the Broken Chains, the rebel group was poised for a fall. Baron Ulbrexis's bloodless revolution did not sit well with all of his followers, especially one Assod Morirr. Morirr was a passionate and well-spoken mutant leader who had joined the Broken Chains in order to fight against his oppressors. Morirr's ongoing belligerent opposition to Ulbrexis's subtle plans created a growing rift within the Broken Chains, as Ulbrexis tolerated him for a time, since he believed that every voice should be heard. Every voice, that is, which wasn't a pawn of the Ruinous Powers. Morirr fell under the sway of the Chaos Gods and entered into a dark pact with a Daemoniac entity. In Ulbrexis's name, he enacted a lethal plan that caused a half a dozen mines to collapse during the midst of a workday, killing countless serfs and a fair number of nobles. Ulbrexis hunted Morirr through a series of deep shafts until he brought him to heel at last within a series of

mines known as the Harrow—Ulbrexis's former fief. Their epic final duel ended in the depths of the Harrow with Ulbrexis maimed and Morirr lifeless due to an energy blast through his skull. The Arbitrators captured the mortally wounded Ulbrexis soon after and publicly proclaimed his execution for crimes against the Imperium.

It has been more than a decade since Baron Ulbrexis was pronounced dead. While it was announced that Ulbrexis was responsible for the massive loss of life, few believed it on Sepheris Secundus and he is quietly venerated almost as a saint across the planet. The rule of Queen Lachryma falters as she nears the end of her days. The mines of Sepheris Secundus are once again the targets of a clever insurgency going by the name of the Broken Chains. However, the current incarnation of the group is decidedly deadlier, employing xenos technology and warp-corrupted devices to achieve their aims, while clearly lacking any reservations about the killing of innocents. Rumour has it that a man named Assod Morirr is now leading the Broken Chains.

INTO THE DEPTHS OF INSANITY

Baron Hopes seems to be an investigative adventure somewhat influenced by Imperial politics, but looks can be deceiving, for it is actually the “horror” adventure of this book. What starts out appearing as a relatively straightforward investigation of a terrorist group, will soon turn far darker than the Acolytes could have guessed at the outset.

The adventure begins with the Acolytes reading a transcript of the final conflict between the heretic Baron Ulbrexis and the mutant terrorist Assod Morirr. They are in within their patron’s study inside the Bastion Serpentis, the Tyrantine Cabal’s fortress on Scintilla’s moon Lachesis. After they finish reading the transcript, Inquisitor Vaarak calmly hands them a series of pict that the Royal Scourges had gathered of various members of the Broken Chains, giving specific emphasis to a pict of Assod Morirr. He then produces another pict taken less than seven sidereal days prior, which shows a very much alive Assod Morirr, or a being with his exact likeness, leading the now resurrected Broken Chains on Sepheris Secundus. Their Inquisitor follows this up with another shocker: Ulbrexis is alive and in a cell within the Bastion Serpentis. Due to the highly unstable nature of the political situation on Sepheris Secundus, the Inquisition is willing to offer Ulbrexis an unprecedented deal. In exchange for his total cooperation in locating and removing the Broken Chains, when the time is ripe, the Inquisition will assist the Baron in taking the throne of Sepheris Secundus.

With a reluctant Ulbrexis in tow, the Acolytes will journey to Sepheris Secundus aboard a Chartist vessel. Along the way, the Baron will prove to be quite different from the heretic he was made out to be. Upon arriving, the Acolytes will swiftly discover that Sepheris Secundus is a miserable planet and will likely decide that, regardless of any other factors, helping Baron Ulbrexis is a noble goal. Agents from the Royal Scourge, along with a representative of the local Adeptus Arbites, will meet with the characters to explain more about the unusual tactics that the Broken Chains have been employing. The more they learn, the less they’ll like what they’ve heard, especially when evidence of the Serrated Query’s involvement surfaces.

Morirr’s forces supposedly strike from a series of deep mines beneath the complex known as the Harrow, which was once part of Ulbrexis’s baronial fief. After being shown the aftermath of

one of the Broken Chains’ attacks, the Acolytes will know they’re up against something unnatural. The Broken Chains’ new agenda only pays lip service to their original goal of freedom from oppression, and the Acolytes will soon face the full horror of what the mutant terrorist turned Chaos worshipper, Assod Morirr, will unleash on them. Investigating various clues will reveal more and more of what the Broken Chains are actually up to. When they finally work out where the mutants will attack next, they’ll finally be able to confront the Broken Chains. In doing so, they’ll discover that Morirr fears his former master, and word of Ulbrexis’ presence will leak. Hordes of serfs will descend upon them, soon followed by the thing which Morirr calls up.

From then on, the only true goal will be survival.

THE LATE BARON

If you’re running the adventures in *Purge the Unclean* as part of an ongoing campaign, the events of Baron Hopes can occur anytime after the Acolytes’ narrow escape from the *Twilight*. Presume that five or six months have passed, unless you wish to run an adventure of your own devising in between. All of the Acolytes will have been scanned for any signs of warp taint in the weeks following their departure from the haunted space hulk. Characters curious as to what has happened to the *Luminous Reproach* and the *Liber Daemonica* will be assured that they’ve been passed to the “right” hands. What they may not be directly told is that their brave actions (that is, if they were successful) will have earned them a “marker” of sorts—meaning that they have the favour of Inquisitor Vaarak. It is up to the GM to decide exactly what form the “favour” takes, be it access to upgraded kit, secret knowledge or extracting the Acolytes from a “tricky” situation in the future.

Baron Hopes opens with the Acolytes each reading a copy of a transcript within a small antechamber of the Bastion Serpentis, the Tyrantine Cabal’s ancient fortress upon Scintilla’s second moon, which all of them have recently been summoned to. Give **Player Handout 3.1: The Transcript** to your players and have them read it as play begins. Then read aloud or paraphrase the following:

TIMELINE

This timeline details the flow of events within the scenario. Note that depending on the actions of the Acolytes, some events may occur out of sequence or not at all.

- The Acolytes meet Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis and learn about his history and the terrorist events on Sepheris Secundus.
- Travel to Sepheris Secundus on the *Pax Behemoth*.
- The Acolytes begin their investigation into the Broken Chains terrorist group that has been destroying mines.
- The Broken Chains strike against the Harrow.
- The Acolytes talk to the mutants and serfs and investigate old Broken Chains hideouts in an attempt to learn where they will strike next.
- The Broken Chains strike against Hazael’s Cross where the Acolytes are waiting for them and their leader, Assod Morirr.
- Morirr summons Warp Zombies in a mass attack. With the help of the Baron, the Acolytes hopefully defeat Morirr and put the Zombies to rest.

Ref: Inq/045678499/BI

Subject: Verbal Transcript of Pict-Recorded Document

Date: 791.M41

Location: Sepheris Secundus,

Ore Processing Complex HA96E (locally known as "the Harrow")

Sector: Calixis (Scintillan Sub)

Original Transcription: Savant Trokner, Ordo Hereticus, Tyrantine Cabal Holding,

Bastion Serpentinis, 792.M41

Additional Notes: Savant Essar, Ordo Hereticus, 02.792.M41



++ Ignorance is a blessing not
to be disdained by the wise ++

++ EXTRACTED FROM MINE SHAFT SECURITY MONITOR STATION BY
ADEPTUS ARBITES OFFICER MERON TISE—ALL OTHER COPIES ELIMINATED. ++

>[RECORDING STARTS]

[Stationary Pict-source] Wide angle view of ore collection station. Ground laced with ore-cart tracks, several carts present. Industrial smelter visible in far corner of chamber. Three tunnel mouths visible, two dark, one lit by electric lamp. Distant sound, indistinct—pict source shaken. [Explosion?] Repeating alarm claxon sounds. Warning lights engage in chamber. [Image and sound remains same for 37 seconds] Sounds of movement. Man [Subject I] in grey coveralls, enters chamber, panting with exertion, from second tunnel mouth. Clothing covered in large stains. [Blood?] Right hand holds industrial shears. Shears drip fluid over the floor. [Subject I] Turns and looks back up the tunnel from which he emerged, clearly expecting pursuit. [Subject I] Runs across chamber towards pict source—pict source begins tracking. A second man [Subject II] emerges from tunnel mouth. [Subject I] approaches pict source—positively identified as Ore Collector 5th Rank, Assod Morirr*. [verified]

VOICE (II): How many did you kill? How many children?

[Subject II] wears grey coveralls, heavy-set; one hand holds a short, slightly curved blade designed for tunnel fighting.

VOICE (I) [MORIRR]: What does it matter? They'll breed more.

VOICE (II): Indistinct snarl of rage.

[Subject II] lunges across room, blade outstretched. His stroke is parried by [Subject I] [Morirr]. Claxon light illuminates [Subject II] for 4 seconds as he struggles with [Subject I] [Morirr]. [Subject II] positively identified as Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis**[verified]. [Subject I] [Morirr] and [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] engage in hand-to-hand combat. Pict source pulls back to capture both men circling about the room, weapons at the ready.

[Subject II] [Ulbrexis] lands several blows in rapid succession, [Subject I] [Morirr] shrugs them off, seemingly unaffected. [Subject I] [Morirr] deals savage wound to [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] side. Combatants circle, blood clearly spreading under [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] coveralls. [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] fall, impaling [Subject I] [Morirr] through torso as [Subject I] [Morirr] shears cut [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] right leg off below the knee. [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] collapses to the ground, blood spurting from his severed leg. [Subject I] [Morirr] begins laughing. [Subject I] [Morirr] picks up [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] with his free hand, pushing him against an ore cart and puts his blades on either side of [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] neck.

VOICE (I) [MORIRR]: Goodbye, Ulbrexis.

[Subject II] [Ulbrexis] punches his right hand into [Subject I] [Morirr] lower jaw. A pulse of purple light flares out the top of [Subject I] [Morirr] head as a blast of energy sears through his skull causing pict source to engage flare compensators [partial loss of picture for 3 seconds]. Suspect attack was delivered by device in [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] ring. [Subject I] [Morirr] face crumples inward and his body slumps to the ground.

VOICE (II) [ULBREXIS]: Goodbye, Morirr.

[Subject II] [Ulbrexis] collapses to mine floor, falling alongside [Subject I] [Morirr] corpse.

>[RECORDING ENDS]

*Ore Collector 5th Rank Assod Morirr. Mutant terrorist affiliated with a group known as the Broken Chains. Wanted in connection with more than 50 cases of sabotage within the mine works of Sepheris Secundus. Mutant status discovered late in life, avoided summary execution by fleeing to deep mine area known as the Shatters. Presumed dead.

**The Heretic Baron of Sepheris Secundus. Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis founded the Broken Chains circa 789.M41 in order to defy the authorities of Sepheris Secundus and advance his heretical democratic agenda. Captured by Adeptus Arbitres agents in 792.M41. Executed in 793.M41—see ++EXPURGED++

Inquisitor Globus Vaarak dominates one corner of the chamber, where he sits patiently sipping at a flask of amasec while you read the transcript. As you finish, he gestures and a small floating servitor soars over the table. The image of a dark-haired man with exceedingly wide eyes flickers into view above the servitor. There is something wrong with the musculature of the man's face—his eyes open and close vertically.

The Inquisitor considers the image for a moment before stating, *"Assod Morirr"* as he places a data-slate upon the conference table you are gathered around. The data-slate shows a high resolution picture that was clearly taken from above the subjects it depicts. Three figures are shown frozen in a running motion. All of them are holding weapons. One has scaled skin, the second seems to be a man made of polished metal and the third, who is looking over his shoulder at his pursuers, is identical to the picture identified as that of Assod Morirr. Vaarak points at the hovering image, *"That was compiled fourteen years ago."* His finger twitches to indicate the data-slate, *"That image was taken on Sepheris Secundus two months ago. You'll note the resemblance, yes?"*

"The transcript's veracity is confirmed. I've actually seen the original. No doubt some of you may be considering that the individual in the second pict is a family relation or perhaps a twin. I've looked into this, however, there is no evidence to give credence to such a theory."

"So why does this matter to us, you're wondering?" Vaarak produces a data-slate and begins to read from it. *"Let's see here, ah-ha. In the two years since the return of the Broken Chains, fourteen separate mines have been compromised, three at a scale from which no recovery is possible within the next century. The latest series of attacks have been absolutely devastating. Their new weapons are an abomination, well beyond our ability to deal with. When the Royal Scourges called us in..."* Vaarak pauses to look about the room. *"This is a missive from Proctor Rotlan, principle Arbitrator investigator on Sepheris Secundus. The Scourges are the local monarchy's troops."* He resumes, *"We thought that they were exaggerating the effects of the bombs. They were not. I've never seen such atrocities, bodies melded into the very rock; some impossibly still alive and screaming. My lord, I urge you to come*

at once. I am at a loss for what to do; the Broken Chains' original network was never uncovered and their hiding spots remain unknown to us. The local nobles resent our presence but fear the repercussions of failing to meet their tithe quotas. They're attempting to shift the blame for not stopping the mutant terrorists on to us. The serfs are terrified of the Broken Chains and are too afraid to speak. I fear it will take the authority of the Inquisition to resolve this matter."

Inquisitor Vaarak sets down the data-slate and looks at each of you. *"There is an ancient saying on world of my birth: destiny cannot be thwarted. I have seen many strange sights in my time and I do not believe in coincidences. I trust that we follow the God-Emperor's grand plan... The Adeptus Arbites did not execute Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis. He is alive and here now, in a cell below us, within this very citadel."*

"I have brought you here to make him an offer: in exchange for his help in rooting out the Broken Chains, the Inquisition is willing to assist him in taking the throne of Sepheris Secundus when Queen Lachryma exits it. An event that is likely to be very soon. If he does not accept our offer, the Inquisition will, at the very least, be forced to incinerate everyone and everything within the mine complex known as the Harrow, despite the crippling effect this will have on the sector."

"If you can acquire the Baron's help, your mission will be to ascertain the location and identification of the mutant terrorist named Assod Morirr and you will find the headquarters of the renewed Broken Chains with the help of Ulbrexis. You are also expected to present an overview of the local situation and a working plan on how to permanently deal with it when I arrive a month or so after you. I don't expect you to take on the Broken Chains alone, and you are to coordinate your efforts with Proctor Rotlan, a local Arbitrator I am on good terms with. I also expect you to 'play nicely' with the Royal Scourges, though they are little better than thugs. Don't forget that it is vital that Ulbrexis must remain anonymous so as not to cause a problem with the local authorities or populace. It may be necessary for you, at times, to disguise yourselves in order to unearth Morirr and his gang."

Your Acolytes may ask questions regarding the nature of the unnatural sounding bombs, Vaarak will only reply with nothing more reassuring than, *"Indeed, a mystery."*



If any of the Acolytes are curious as to why Ulbrexis wasn't executed, Vaarak states that he believes the Imperium has long been wary of Lachryma's line—thus the Baron's gene codes remain useful. He may also comment that it was deemed the Baron's services might be needed in the future and hence his life was spared. What those services might be, however, he will not say.

Vaarak believes that Ulbrexis's hatred of Morirr, coupled with his long association with the serfs of the Harrow, will convince him to accept the deal, even if the Baron doesn't think the Imperium will hold up their end of the bargain. The Inquisitor wishes to send the Acolytes to negotiate though, as a sort of "peace offering" to the Baron. *"He has never been willing to speak with a Bearer of the Seal. It would seem he has a... distaste for Inquisitors... We have decided not to risk his refusal, therefore I wish you to speak with him and represent the Inquisition as it were."* Vaarak hands the most senior Acolyte a small pendant, which resembles a rosette. *"This will take you through the doors below."*

A pair of Inquisitorial storm troopers escorts you down into the lower levels of Bastion Serpentis. What follows is a bewildering array of doors, chambers and hallways all of which seem deliberately designed to disorientate and confuse. While the Bastion is, in the main, formed of black stone, the seemingly natural cave area that you enter in the bowels of the edifice clearly appears to be as old as the upper levels. The storm troopers stay with you the entire time, guiding you past several wrought iron doors. At last you

are brought before an unprepossessing door, clearly not as reinforced as many of the others you have passed. The storm troopers indicate that this door is the correct one, stating, *"Call if our presence is required, sirs,"* before withdrawing some distance away.

The pendant given to you by Vaarak opens the door, which slides back into the wall, revealing a stone cell some 20-foot square. A simple cot, a single crude chair and small table with a handful of books on it are the only adornments the room boasts. As the door opens, the room's sole occupant looks up from the book he was perusing. A heavy-set man with long silvery grey hair and a crudely kept beard regards you with sharp violet eyes. He slowly rises from his chair, casually placing a bookmark into his tome before tossing it to the table beside him. His right leg, below the knee, is clearly an augmentic construction ending in an inhuman three-toed bionic foot. He says nothing at first, quietly studying you, before saying, *"It seems they have honoured my wishes, unless the Inquisition's standards for its Inquisitors has dropped sharply. To what do I owe the honour of this visit?"*

Ulbrexis listens to whatever pitches the Acolytes go with. If they announce that Morirr is still alive, he flatly states, *"That is not possible."* The time-stamped copy of the pict from Vaarak's data-slate causes the colour to visibly drain from his face, but he will continue to shake his head in angry denial. *"Such images are easily created using the right pict-devices."* Clever Acolytes may well realise that it doesn't really matter whether Baron Ulbrexis believes that his old foe is alive or not; what matters is the threat of the Harrow being immolated if the leaders of the revived Broken Chains cannot be found, coupled with the offer to raise him to the throne of Sepheris Secundus. The latter he finds somewhat incredulous though he readily believes the former:

"Really? The Inquisition intends to assist a publicly reviled heretic, in fact a supposedly executed heretic, in taking over one of the most important tithing worlds in the entire Segmentum Obscurus? Is that desperation or do your masters truly think that long years in a cell have rotted my brain matter? Enough. Tell your lords that I'll help to stop these impostors, if only for the sake of my people."

BARON HAVALIR SAERTON ULBREXIS

Ulbrexis is a poet, a scholar, a warrior and a visionary. When roleplaying Ulbrexis, keep in mind that he is a man who tried to change his world against near overwhelming odds. However, he has been in a cell for over a decade and subject at times to both malnutrition and torture. His spirit is unbroken, but he has become old before his time. His speech remains witty and urbane, but his fighting days are all but behind him. For some he is a traitor, whilst for others he is a victim.

Ulbrexis' profile can be found on **page 128**.



The presumption, obviously, is that the Acolytes will succeed in convincing Ulbrexis to help them. Don't make it too hard for the players, but you could get them to make some **Interaction Skill Tests** to get the Baron on side. If they really are set on a course to insult and anger the Baron by their words or actions, the adventure can proceed without him, though it will lose a fair amount of its impact—and the PCs will have some serious trouble in any direct fight with Assod Morirr. A better course would probably be to allow the Acolytes to convince the Baron to help them regardless of their bad behaviour, or remind them that their masters will be unhappy if they don't get the Baron's help. Either way, if they are particularly nasty to Ulbrexis he will remember this for later, perhaps when they most need his help.

ABOARD THE PAX BEHEMOTH

The Acolytes will have been outfitted with whatever equipment is deemed necessary for their mission to Sepheris Secundus—GMs may wish to set a limit of 200 to 500 thrones per person. Items and gear of Average Availability are in good supply (Average Difficulty), though

anything with a Scarce (or above) Availability will be one-step harder to find—running the acquisition of such items as a brief “flashback” scene could prove to be entertaining. This may also be a good time for an Acolyte to “call-in” the favour of Vaarak, should the character want to obtain something particularly Rare or illicit.

The journey to Sepheris Secundus will take approximately three months, give or take several weeks due to the vagaries of the warp. Inquisitor Vaarak has arranged passage for the group with a Chartist Captain named Kobal Aizdar aboard his vessel, the *Pax Behemoth*, an Imperial transport licensed to take routes throughout the Calixis Sector. The Inquisitor intends to follow a month or so behind the Acolytes, having unspecified “other business” to attend to first. The *Pax Behemoth* is a merchant vessel meant for cargo hauling, but Captain Aizdar is not above earning some extra thrones by ferrying members of the Inquisition about. Compared to some of the grand ships (and perhaps the space hulk) that the Acolytes have been aboard, the *Pax Behemoth* may not seem much like its namesake. However, Captain Aizdar looks like he would have a fair chance of beating a Grox in a wrestling contest and his bellowing laughter is seldom lacking down the corridors of his ship. Aizdar's crew are well turned out and his ship seems a model of efficiency.

CAPTAIN KOBAL AIZDAR

Captain Aizdar is a roaring giant of a man, quick to curse but quicker to laugh. His family lineage is an ancient one: his most prized possession, which he'll eventually get around to pointing out to all of his passengers, is his hereditary charter to ply the space lanes of the Calixis Sector. Sealed behind a small void shield, the charter has been passed down his family line for close to a thousand years and bears the signature of no less a person than Drusus himself. Captain Aizdar has a stunning collection of oddities and artworks that he has amassed over the years, a common affectation with Rogue Traders, which he'll proudly show off to passengers he comes to favour. He is especially fond of his Confessor Frog, a small amphibian known for both its distinct croaking cry "repent-ti-ti" and the fact that it is reputed to be the only creature from the death world of Woe that isn't deadly... well not to humans at any rate.

The captain's profile can be found on **page 128**.



The trip should provide the Acolytes with adequate time to familiarise themselves with the unpleasant basics of life on Sepheris Secundus. You may wish to relate to them, or have them read the section on the planet from **pages 303 to 307 of DARK HERESY**. The extended journey will also give them a chance to interact with both the Baron and Captain Aizdar. In the captain's case, it is often useful for members of the Inquisition to be on good terms with a Rogue Trader and he may well prove to be a future ally. Captain Aizdar will chat about a good number of subjects, as well as the many worlds he has seen throughout the Calixis Sector and beyond, which could serve as an excellent way for you to introduce future plot hooks. Aizdar claims to have seen a Void Kraken once, a legendary beast of the Outer Dark that swims through the cold of space, preying on ships. He also claims to know nothing of the Serrated Query as he is a little wary of saying anything incriminating to a member of the Inquisition, so he keeps some of his more illegal stories to himself unless one or more of the Acolytes makes a concerted effort to become friends with him. If they do, he'll reveal that he once did some smuggling for them:

"In my youth, mind you, in my youth decades and decades ago, I met a man who offered me a sweet haul. A cache of goods to be moved from one port to another, no questions asked. He had an ill look about him. A series of ritualised cuts on his arms formed patterns that I wasn't too keen to look upon and he wore a pendant, a blade shaped like a question mark it was, on a chain about his neck. I was young and I needed the gelt, so I took the deal. What he didn't tell me was that the goods were xenos weapons and, what's worse, biologicals. We were well underway when I discovered the blasphemy the bastard had brought aboard my ship. I told him I'd void him and his whole cargo, but he doubled the money... Years later, I heard tell of the Serrated Query. If I'd known then what I've learned since, I'd have sent him on an airless walk, money or no. Ruthless scum they are, would knife a man for his boots. Start wars they do, conflicts dealt out to the highest bidder or so the rumours go. Some say they worship the Dark Powers, but I cannot speak to that. They're a bad lot though and no mistake."

If asked about a “Faceless One” or some other similar query, Aizdar will note that he has, in fact, heard that title a number of different times over the years in a variety of ports. Sometimes in connection with criminal activity, sometimes whispered to be behind a given cult and every so often, mentioned as being an agent of the Imperium. He knows little else on the subject.

Baron Ulbrexis is a fascinating man. His protracted years in a cell have made him crave human interaction and he makes a point of getting to know each of the Acolytes individually, though he never tries to unduly manipulate them. Ulbrexis is conversant on a vast array of topics, enough so that Acolytes would probably regard him (somewhat accurately) as a savant. Since the Inquisition purposefully erased the details about his past, the Acolytes will probably be curious about why and how he managed to rebel, as well as what he was actually trying to accomplish. The following are the Baron’s thoughts on some of the various subjects that the Acolytes may talk to him about:

On Sepheris Secundus:

“A miserable world locked in thousand-year-old patterns that no longer have any meaning. Once, the spare resources of the planet made the noble and serf dichotomy make sense, before the coming of the Imperium. Now it only serves to keep the people in a cycle of meaningless drudgery and cruel bondage. What is more, it is unsustainable. The day will soon come when the vast resources of Sepheris finally run out. What then will the nobles do, having on their hands an entire populace of uneducated serfs who know only how to quarry? I suppose the ranks of the Imperial Guard will swell that year, eh?”

On founding the Broken Chains:

“The Barons live existences beyond the dreams of the serfs and they give back nothing but misery. I sought to change the order of my planet and was cast down for it. I realised that even with the hard evidence that I had so painstakingly gathered, which showed that the machines of the Adeptus Mechanicus could improve our world’s lot, the nobility were not interested in change. I created the Broken Chains to disrupt mining operations so that the Imperium would send experts who would hopefully see just how inefficient the mining operations of Sepheris Secundus actually are. I think it was working until I was betrayed.”

On mutants:

“They did not ask to be as they are. Punishing them merely for being born is beneath us. If there is any true sin in them, the Emperor will call them to account in the end.”

On Assod Morirr:

“A passionate man. He was a serf who taught himself to read and write, long before his mutant status was uncovered. He was ever bloodthirsty, though. If Morirr is truly still alive, I fear our little expedition will not end well.”



SEIPHERIS SECUNDUS: AN UNPLEASANT PLACE TO VISIT

The *Pax Behemoth* exits the immaterium on schedule and soon moves into high orbit above Sepheris Secundus. Sepheris Secundus is an ugly world, a blizzard-covered ice ball dominated by a single super continent. There are long gashes in the land visible from space between the masses of swirling clouds, which Ulbrexis notes as being some of the larger mining developments on the surface. A number of tugs move back and forth from the planet to a large orbital dock that constantly collects the mineral wealth of Sepheris Secundus, as the world's tithe is never-ending.

Captain Aizdar's crew transmit a series of encrypted vox-codes that the captain was entrusted with for the mission and he soon declares that he has the coordinates for the meeting with their local contact. Captain Aizdar walks with the Acolyte's crew to one of the *Pax Behemoth's* forward holds where a shuttle awaits them. The Acolytes and Ulbrexis may be surprised when Aizdar announces that he'll pilot them down personally, *"Ha. Inquisitor Vaarak would have my hide if I couldn't swear I'd delivered you safely."* The ride down is not nearly as vicious

as some of the re-entry drops the Acolytes have experienced in the past.

Blowing snow and ugly grey clouds are all you can see as Captain Aizdar shuttles you down through the cloud layers of Sepheris Secundus. As you finally sail into a cloudless pocket, a sweeping vista of snow-covered forest stretching to the horizon in all directions dominates your viewpoints.

Baron Ulbrexis looks out upon the planet, an unreadable expression on his face, *"History tells us that great kingdoms once flourished across the surface. All that's left of them are lonely ice-locked castle ruins. Everything of significance on Sepheris Secundus occurs below the surface now."* The forest below the shuttle abruptly terminates, transforming into a series of huge uneven piles of stone and earth. A massive crescent shaped scar cuts through the ground between the great earthworks below the shuttle, stretching off into the distance to both north and south. Ulbrexis's voice is a barely audible whisper above the shuttle's engines as he states, *"The Harrow."*

The shuttle settles down on a crudely formed landing pad set amidst the rock and soil mass that surrounds the Harrow; refuse from the mine works below. Off to the west, the Acolytes can see a series of

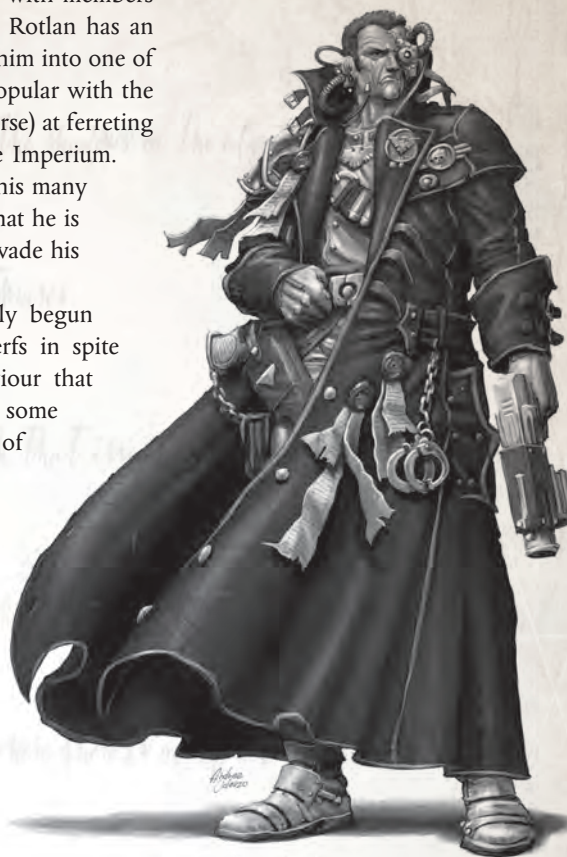


PROCTOR NOLES ROTLAN

Proctor Rotlan is a tall imposing man, as is often the case with members of the Adeptus Arbites. Unlike most of his fellows, though, Rotlan has an active imagination, which has served him as an asset, turning him into one of Sepheris Secundus's chief investigators. However, he is not popular with the local nobles as he is too skilled by far (in their opinions of course) at ferreting out their schemes to hide resources from the Queen and the Imperium. The ongoing troubles with the Broken Chains have allowed his many baronial enemies to accuse him of incompetence—a charge that he is finding difficult to fight as the mutant terrorists continue to evade his best efforts to locate and neutralise them.

Despite his distinctly Imperial outlook, Rotlan has slowly begun to notice the terrible conditions of Sepheris Secundus's serfs in spite of himself. While he would never countenance any behaviour that would not be in the Imperium's best interests, he could, with some effort, be talked around to Ulbrexis's point of view, in terms of improving some of the working and living conditions of the serfs. Proctor Rotlan is unaware that Baron Ulbrexis is alive and, as far as he knows, was executed for his heresies. If Ulbrexis's true identity is revealed (as it will be later in the scenario), Rotlan will feel compelled to act, though what he chooses to do will be greatly influenced by how the Acolytes have interacted with him up to that point. Honourable Acolytes not given to radicalism will engender his trust in their handling of their special prisoner more than group less in step with Imperial values. Inquisition or no, a liberal group may rapidly find the Proctor and his men turning against them.

The **Proctor's** profile can be found on **page 128**.



orbital tugs ascending and descending in a seemingly endless progression as they ferry ore from the surface to collection stations in low orbit. Ulbrexis notes that such areas can be found about every mine on Sepheris Secundus, and often serve as a rendezvous point for clandestine activities. Just as the Baron finishes, several flares appear in the distance and a single figure walks forward through the lightly swirling snow towards the shuttle. Aizdar grins back at the Acolytes, *"Your contact is here. Good luck."* The captain shakes hands all about as the group exits the shuttle. The air outside the shuttle is cold, but not bitterly so, and has a damp earthen smell, doubtless arising from the vast piles of sediment surrounding the craft. A tall man wrapped in a dark thermal bodysuit, marked with the insignia of an Adeptus Arbites investigator, steps forward to meet the Acolytes with a burning red flare held aloft in his left hand to illuminate his way. He looks about the group for a moment then says, *"I am Proctor Noles Rotlan, Adeptus Arbites and I have been expecting you. And glad I am to see you all. Welcome to Sepheris Secundus, you are sorely needed."*

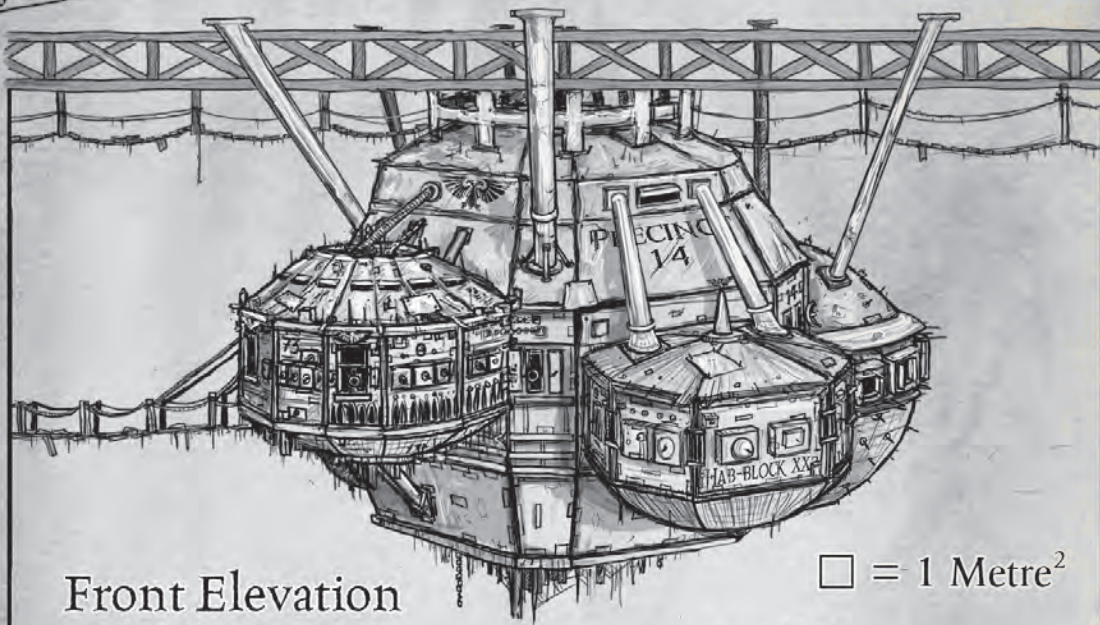
You are led by the Arbitrator along a path between layers of the tumbled earth to the edge of the mine works. Hundreds of thousands of serfs work at every available rock surface for as far as the eye can see. The sound of tools scraping against stone reverberates up from the cavern floor, echoing off the quarry walls till it is near deafening. A shanty town of wooden buildings lies on the immense mine steps directly below, while the ramshackle suspended streets of the Harrow stretch out in front of you. A massive fortified castle that looks vaguely reminiscent of an upside-down Imperial bunker clings like a barnacle to the far side of the mine canyon. Rotlan points it out saying that it is the dwelling of the local ruling Baron Alswere.

Have the players make a **Routine (+20) Perception Test**. Those that succeed hear or see Ulbrexis spit at the mention of Alswere's name and shake his head. If they question him about this, he states that Alswere was a rival of his who hated serfs with a passion.

Proctor Rotlan leads the Acolytes to a small odd shaped building suspended beneath a

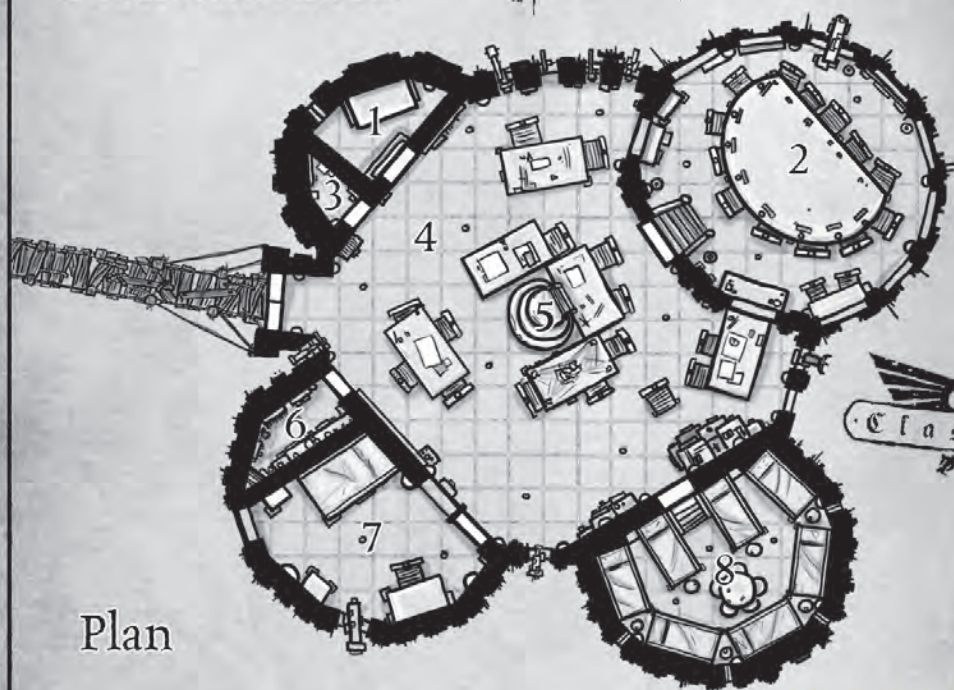


ARBITES OP-CENTRE



Front Elevation

□ = 1 Metre²



Plan

Key

- 1 = Containment Cell
- 2 = Briefing Room
- 3 = Waste Disposal
- 4 = Central Office

- 5 = Ladder to Upper Entrance
- 6 = Armoury
- 7 = Officer's Room
- 8 = Sleeping Quarters

IMP REC 1002372



52/34/CS/NNE

THE HARROW

CARTOPIC 627/583/AA612

THE HARROW

The Harrow is a long series of mines that stretches over two hundred kilometers from north to south in what appears to be a vaguely crescent-shaped pit. It lies just over a thousand kilometers east of Icenholm, the capital city of Sepheris Secundus from which Queen Lachryma rules. There are larger and more productive mines on the planet, but few that produce the exceptional metals that the Harrow holds. The Adeptus Mechanicus was willing to make a deal with Baron Ulbrexis in part due to the presence of skepsinite, a rare ore critical for crafting the wiring of advanced cogitation units. The Machine God's followers were exceptionally keen to have access to greater quantities of the precious metal, and their desire encouraged them to turn a blind eye towards Ulbrexis's more questionable activities.

The Harrow consists of vast open pit surface mines to the south that are slowly replaced by deep shaft mines as one moves to the north. The open pit areas resemble gigantic steps that have been sliced out of the ground, creating ore faces kilometers long, at which seemingly endless lines of serfs carve away day and night. The Harrow's ghostly grey marble, which is shot through with luminescent lines of silver and quartz, is especially favoured by many of the noble houses of the Calixis Sector. The topmost steps, whose mineral wealth has long since played out, are crammed with a myriad of crudely built wooden shacks, rickety lean-tos, and ragged tarpaulin tents. An array of bridges, rope spans and ill-jointed girders run between the sides of the Harrow, creating a series of mid-air streets that the serfs regularly trundle over as they go about their dreary lives. The northern mines of the Harrow are all deep shafts surmounted by large poppet heads, which sit on the edges of the Harrow's ravine. The Harrow's poppet heads are large wooden-framed buildings containing huge manual winding engines that dozens of serfs work at in order to raise and lower the mine's conveyances. Tens of thousands of serfs descend daily into the darkness of the Harrow's deep shafts, some never to return, in order to bring forth many prized metals including the precious skepsinite.

Denizens of the Harrow refer to the cast-off remains of their labour as "the Spoil" and it surrounds the outsides of the mines for several kilometres in nearly every direction. Serfs that work the shaft mines refer to themselves as Deepers, whereas those who work the open quarries above are called Skimmers. Noble tradition holds that all Deepers are insane and all Skimmers are sluggish, a conceit the serfs slyly refer to with the deadpan question, "Crazy or lazy?" when asking where a fellow serf works in the Harrow. After Ulbrexis's fall, the Harrow was split up into several fiefdoms, the largest of which (and most pertinent to this adventure) belongs to Baron Cald Loquious Alswere, a one-time vicious rival of Ulbrexis's. Baron Alswere's fief dominates the centre of the Harrow, meaning he controls both the open pit and deep shaft mines—making it very, very lucrative. Unfortunately for Alswere, it also makes his mines prime targets for disruptive mutant terrorists.

series of support girders. The Adeptus Arbites have set up a temporary centralised operation centre above the mine works of the Harrow, away from the mass of serf tenements that line the sides of the pit. The Acolytes are likely to find the trip to the op-centre more than a little disconcerting as they navigate a long series of unsound looking wooden bridges and roughly formed ladders to reach the bulbous structure. The few serfs that they see on the topmost streets never raise their eyes from their feet and actively avoid paying any attention to the party. The op-centre resembles an odd shaped fruit growing from the underside of the aerial shanty streets of the Harrow.

The inside of the op-centre is filled with a dozen or so bustling Arbites personnel, several of them servitors, busy compiling data and reports from throughout the Harrow—though compared to the sounds of the mines being worked outside, it is very quiet inside. One of the tables has a holographic display, the rest are a variety of drafting tables with

mechanical drawing instruments. A large map of the Harrow dominates one wall with dozens of brightly coloured pins marking different locations on it. Several windows have optical instruments placed at them, ranging from an unidentifiable device to some plain brass elongated telescopes. There is a small armoury, a briefing room and sleeping quarters containing several tightly spaced bunks alongside the commanding officer's personal room.

The bulk of the room falls quiet as the Acolytes enter, leaving only the sounds of the servitors' ceaseless toil to fill the silence. Several of the officers' present salute Rotlan, but most stare at the PCs with undisguised awe. Even though the Adeptus Arbites are one of the few groups that ever gets to deal with Inquisition members on a friendly basis, they are still a little shocked to actually meet members of the legendary left hand of the Emperor. Noise swiftly picks up again as the officers return to their work.

FACTS & SPECULATION

Rotlan brings the Acolytes into the briefing room along with one of his senior assistants, Regulator Mallier, whom he introduces to the PCs. Mallier is a gruff drill sergeant type, but he is still fairly respectful of the Acolytes as he lays out what the Arbitrators have discovered so far along with their suspicions.

The (presumably) newly reformed Broken Chains destroyed their first mine close to three years ago using a sizable amount of explosive stolen from one of the local baron's supplies. They have been regularly active since, destroying an average of one mine every two and a half months, though their attacks have steadily increased of late. While the majority of the original sabotages used standard explosives, in the last six months their attacks have grown progressively more nightmarish, as the terrorists have begun employing xenos devices in favour of more conventional explosives. The xenos explosives seem to somehow distort space, causing people and the environment to briefly

go out of phase with each another, resulting in gruesome damage when realspace "re-aligns" itself, to the detriment of those caught within the effect radius of the bomb. The Adeptus Arbites have recovered a few large fragments of the devices that the terrorists used, several of which bear engraved markings of some kind. Members of the Adeptus Mechanicus have already examined them to no avail other than noting that they are made from a high-grade alloy of steel and an unidentified xenos metal. Proctor Rotlan brings in a small sealed receptacle holding various bomb fragments. All of the Acolytes that played through the events of *Rejoice For You Are True* can make a **Routine (+20) Intelligence Test** to recognise that they've seen such metal before—it looks exactly like the support beams from the Serrated Query's processing lab on Ambulon. The engravings have been altered into illegibility by the device's detonation though.

While the Broken Chains have been operating openly for close to three years, a large shipment of valuable ore went missing some seven years ago and was never recovered. The Arbites suspect that the Broken Chains may have carried out the heist to fund their present operations. This, obviously, suggests that they have off-world connections.

CAPTAIN MOVERN

Movern seldom shaves and bathes only when it occurs to him to do so, which is infrequently. He is heavy-set and walks with a pronounced swagger. A thug who likes to hurt people, Movern is happy to have found the perfect career in which to do so. He acts simple-minded at times and is inclined to go about his duties without much thought, but he is no fool. Movern is fairly corrupt; accepting bribes to turn a blind eye on certain activities, such as the smuggling that goes on at different mines across Sepheris Secundus. The entire terrorist business with the Broken Chains has brought too much royal scrutiny into his affairs of late, something he isn't happy about. As long as the Acolytes stick to the task at hand and do their job quickly, Captain Movern will have few problems with them. Should they start to stray into matters that he thinks they shouldn't, though, he may arrange for them to have an accident. After all, the mines of the Harrow can be a dangerous place for off-worlders. If the Acolytes announce who they work for, Movern becomes immediately convinced from then on that, regardless of whatever other reasons they may have for coming to Sepheris Secundus, they're also on the planet in order to investigate his misdeeds. This makes him very cautious and polite as he can manage—but all the more inclined to kill them if matters can be arranged in order to hide his involvement.

Movern's profile can be found on **page 128**.



Rotlan will show the Acolytes maps of the mines, noting the mines and areas that have been targeted in the past. So far, no pattern to the attacks has been discerned, other than that they were all located within the Harrow. However, an Acolyte who can make either a **Hard (-20) Forbidden Lore (Warp or Daemonology)** or a **Difficult (-10) Scholastic Lore (Occult) Test** can determine a pattern to the attacks. Each attacked location can be joined-up to reveal a spiral; one that started at the highest point of the mine complex and which is slowly moving downwards. Looked at in this light, a small number of attacks appear to be distractions from the real pattern that the Broken Chains appears to be following.

Armed with this knowledge, Acolytes may make a **Routine (+20) Test against either Common Lore (War), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) or Logic**, to be able to discern on the various locations where the next attacks of the Broken Chains will be—if they intend to continue the pattern that the Acolytes have detected. At this point, the Acolytes will be unable to determine exactly why someone would want to form such a pattern—see **A Blueprint For Madness on page 121** for more details.

WHAT THE ARBITRATORS KNOW

- The arbitrators have searched the majority of the mines for any sign of where the Broken Chains may be based, but they've as yet found nothing.
- The serfs of the Harrow are clearly terrified of the Broken Chains and appear ready to help, but seem to know nothing.
- Rotlan notes (with evident disdain) that both the local baron's troops and the Royal Scourges have used brutal torture in an attempt to get useful information from the serfs, but with their lives already so bleak there is very little they can be subject to which has any particular effect.
- Rotlan and Mallier are both convinced that if the serfs knew anything, they would've already spoken. However, a lifetime of abuse has made the serfs strong enough to resist torture. There are secret leaders in the Harrow's serf community who have an idea of what's going on, most of them being former disciples of Ulbrexis. **See page 109.**

- A large number of the members of the Broken Chains are unquestionably mutants. Surveillance footage and eyewitnesses back this up.
- The terrorists tend to dress in indistinct brown robes with cowls and are armed with a wide variety of weapons, the majority of which consist of autoguns, with a few lasguns evidently stolen from dead Royal Scourges, and a fair number of frag grenades.
- While some of the mines around the area Ulbrexis indicated have since been returned to a semblance of their former output, the key shafts are recorded in the arbitrators' records as either abandoned or unclear. There have been no reports of any trouble in the area since the last attack. Baron Alswere's men have consistently left reports stating that the area is all but abandoned, as none of the superstitious serfs wish to have anything to do with the tainted mine works.
- Rotlan will show interested Acolytes a data-stack attached to a baroque pict-device if they wish to inspect the surveillance footage for themselves. Various images can be called up into the optical viewer with a **Routine (+20) Tech-Use Test**. Grainy pict that have been slightly altered to allow for better resolution of images taken in dark areas will flip past the viewer's eyes at a steady pace. One of the more distinctly recognisable of the Broken Chains' operatives is a massive mutant with what appears to be blue-grey metallic skin.
- One of the Broken Chains is likely a psyker, a pyrokinetic. The Adeptus Arbites have found numerous partially burned corpses near the site of several of the terrorists' attacks. One of their investigating arbitrators was killed during an attack—his body was found with strange burns, one of which was in the distinct pattern of a hand. Regulator Mallier passes over a pict-slate with the image of a man's bare torso. A hand-shaped burn mark is on the body's left shoulder, thumb towards the throat. A large burned hole is evident in the lower right abdomen.
- Since his reappearance, Assod Morirr has been verifiably shot on at least two occasions—once in the head, yet he keeps returning. The Arbites suspect that he may have some kind of power field,

The arbitrators answer all of the Acolytes' questions to the best of their ability, but the bulk of what they know is listed above. Neither Rotlan nor Mallier is willing to speak too much about what they witnessed in the aftermath of the recent attacks. They are both clearly uneasy about what they saw, *"God-Emperor will it not, but I fear you'll see it for yourselves soon enough."*

The Adeptus Arbites were brought into the case when it became evident that the Broken Chains' attacks were going to interfere with the planet's tithe quotas. Rotlan states that tomorrow he is supposed to introduce the Acolytes to the local liaison for the Royal Scourges, one Captain Movern. The arbitrator is clearly not particularly thrilled at the prospect. He notes, if asked, that he finds Captain Movern to be a brutal thug, not an officer of the law. Rotlan recommends that they tell nothing to the locals that they don't deem it absolutely necessary for them to know.

After the briefing is over, Rotlan and Mallier leave the room in order to attend to other matters, but also so that the Acolytes can discuss what they've learned without the arbitrators present. Rotlan notes before going, *"I assure you on my honour, there are no recording devices within this room. Conversations that occur here stay here, something you won't find elsewhere on Sepheris Secundus."*

With Rotlan and Mallier gone, Baron Ulbrexis lets out a long shuddering gasp of pent-up emotion and begins rapidly annotating the various maps, noting spots where the Broken Chains once had (and may still have) bolt-holes. Let the PCs discuss what they have learnt so far, speculating on what it might all mean while Ulbrexis studies the maps. At a suitable point in the conversation, read or paraphrase the following:

Ulbrexis suddenly whispers, *"Oh, clever. Very, very clever you damned wretch."* He gestures to the grand map of the Harrow before you. *"None of these destroyed mines are crucial to the under-way, the passages that connect the deep shaft mines of the Harrow. But by damaging these ones here and here, Morirr, if it is Morirr, has made it easier to travel about without detection below ground by using some of our old bases."*

Give the Acolytes as much time as they wish to discuss matters after the above revelation. Ulbrexis believes he can find several of the original Broken Chains' hideaways and he is convinced that one of them is still in use, as it is located between several of the destroyed mine shafts.

If the Acolytes inform Proctor Rotlan of their deductions, he will listen with extreme interest. Rotlan will not presume to ask what the Acolytes think, as he doesn't presume to ask anything of the Inquisition that the Inquisition isn't ready to reveal. However, the more the Acolytes take Rotlan into their confidence, the more he grows to trust and respect them.

GETTING SETTLED

The Adeptus Arbites eventually offer to show the Acolytes to their lodgings. There is little room in the op-centre, so the arbitrators have secured the best quarters the Harrow has to offer—by removing a few serf tenants from some of the more securely built housing on the upper steps of the nearby mine works. The chosen dwellings are all extremely crude affairs but they're secure from wind and rain, if lacking any other comforts. Ulbrexis quietly comments (out of the arbitrators' earshot) that such opulent housing can only belong to one of the richest serf mine bosses. Rotlan and Mallier invite the Acolytes to dine with them in the evening. Acolytes might want to use this as an opportunity to get some more information from the arbitrators. Whilst no new information will be forthcoming at the dinner from their hosts, the Acolytes should have the chance pick up any information that they might have missed from the briefing, plus the opportunity to review the information already gained. If the invitation to dinner is not accepted, arrangements have been made for provisions to be regularly delivered from the commons for the duration of their stay. Dining on Sepheris Secundus for serfs tends to be a fairly bland affair consisting mainly of stews and ales. The Arbitrators have fresh bread, fresh vegetables and occasionally venison-like meat from some of the hardier herd animals still roaming the icy forests of Sepheris Secundus; otherwise, they eat fare similar to that of the serfs.

Note that if the Acolytes do take up the arbitrators invitation to dinner and take Baron Ulbrexis with them, the possibility of uncovering the Baron's real identity grows. Wise Acolytes may wish to leave one of their number at "home" with Ulbrexis rather than take the risk of exposing their "companion".

Move on to the next scene unless one or more of the Acolytes is determined to start roaming the Harrow, in which case refer to **Serfing Undercover on page 110**.



A PRIEST'S LOT

It is unsurprising that the serfs of Sepheris Secundus have become such a deeply religious people, as faith is nearly all they have to keep them going in the face of their painfully hard lives. As such, Acolytes affiliated with the Ecclesiarchy will have both the easiest and the hardest time gaining the trust of the local serfs. Normally, members of the lay clergy preach to the masses of serfs and the majority of the populace will never meet a “real” clergyman. Speaking to an actual priest is a once-in-a-lifetime event that a serf will remember for years to come. Thus, any priest approaching the serfs for information will never suffer for lack of it. In fact, he is likely to be deluged as the serfs rush to try to be as useful as possible, telling him anything and everything he may or may not wish to hear. However, word will swiftly get around the mines that a priest is present and thereafter, whenever the character is out in the Harrow, a near constant line of serfs will begin approaching him, asking for confession, counsel on troubling matters, offering a baby to be blessed, asking for a marriage to be consecrated, etc. Even if he sends such supplicants away, some will always remain within a stone's throw, hoping he'll relent. Gradually, the PC should be made to realise the utterly sobering thought that many of the serfs who approach him are literally risking their lives just to speak with him for a minute or two.

In the later parts of this adventure, after all hell has broken loose, reward a humble and decent priest by having dozens of serfs that he has helped fling themselves between him and harm without hesitation as they will all fervently believe that their souls are better served in dying for an honest clergyman than continuing to live on their miserable world.

Tech-priests may also find ingenious ways to ingratiate themselves with the locals, perhaps by offering to fix tools and repair personal items like glow-lamps. The downtrodden serfs will meet such demonstrations of assistance and “magic” with goodwill, if not reverence.

Acolytes who endeavour to curry favour with the serfs should receive a bonus to Inquiry and Interaction Tests when dealing with the mineworkers.

MEETING THE LOCALS

The Acolytes are likely to awake at dawn to the chinking of tools against stone and the cries of greeting as serfs change work-shifts. Captain Movern asked Rotlan to be introduced to the “off-worlders” just before noon, as that would give him enough time to sleep off his hangover. They can spend their time beforehand as they desire, though one of the first things any Acolyte will notice is that despite the freezing cold weather, the serfs go about with only the minimum of clothing—much of which is threadbare or patched together rags. The serfs appear a sorry lot; scarred faces, frostbitten fingers—many displaying horrendous injuries. If the Acolytes wish to have a look about the Harrow, travel from one side to the other is accomplished via the aerial streets suspended above the mine works. There are a wide variety of ways to travel up and down the steps—rope ladders being the most common, though wide stairs have been hacked out of the rock in a haphazard fashion at irregular intervals. There are overseers posted all along the mines, but most of them will give an Acolyte no more than a single glance before immediately turning away when they realise they aren't serfs.

Noon on Sepheris Secundus isn't much brighter than the rest of the day, nor much warmer. Captain Movern meets with the Acolytes within the Adeptus Arbiters op-centre, along with a few of his men. He clearly doesn't like Rotlan, but does his level best to be civil. Movern wasn't told that the Acolytes work for the Inquisition, having only been told by Rotlan that they are “specialists” of

some sort or another. If the PCs make it clear to him who they work for, he and his men go visibly pale and his manner changes considerably, from brusque to almost fawning. Otherwise, he makes it clear that the Acolytes have only been allowed to interfere in this business in order to clean up the “mess the arbitrators have made of it”.

The Royal Scourges wear carapace armour that resembles brightly coloured stained glass, favouring red and yellow tints. Their standard armament consists of lasguns, chainblades and grenades—making them the most heavily armed and armoured unit on the planet. Due to the importance of the Harrow's production and the ongoing terrorist activities of the Broken Chains, several squads of Royal Scourges have been bivouacked locally at Baron Alswere's castle, away from their normal quarters in the capital city. Movern typically travels with an honour guard of three elite Scourges.

Captain Movern states that Baron Alswere is presently occupied with important business at Icenholm, but sends his regards along to the Acolytes. Movern doesn't care how the Acolytes intend to get their results, but insists on being informed about any significant raids on the Broken Chains so that he and the Royal Scourges can participate. Obviously, if he is aware they're with the Inquisition, he frames his demands upon the PCs more in terms of diplomatic requests. Soon after he excuses himself, stating that his duties require that he be elsewhere.

After the Royal Scourges departure, Rotlan and Mallier ask what they can do for the Acolytes, basically putting all the resources the arbitrators can muster at their disposal. The data-stacks and codifiers within the op-centre hold enough information to



allow Acolytes to use the following Scholastic Lores for the duration of their investigation: **Chymistry, Cryptology, Imperial Creed, Judgement, Occult and Tactica Imperialis**—even if they do not have these Skills. The arbitrators give the Acolytes permits that allow them to travel about the Harrow as they see fit, though anyone wishing to follow the procedure of asking about for local gossip will need to modify their normal procedures to account for the grim realities of Sepheris Secundus' culture. Rotlan and Mallier will volunteer to take the Acolytes to any place they wish to inspect firsthand.

SERFING UNDERCOVER

Foraging for information in local “bars” is a bit difficult on Sepheris Secundus. There are indeed “drinking rooms” (as they are known), as drinking to drown one’s sorrows is a pastime even the wretchedly poor serfs enjoy on occasion, but such establishments are few and frequently monitored by serfs loyal to the barons who swiftly pass along rumours of any seditious talk. Acolytes may find more success if they manage to ingratiate themselves with one of the numerous worker camps where large extended families’ gather to eat, sleep and share tales. Such camps are semi-permanent as whole families regularly move around in order to follow the work—as one pit face runs “dry” another becomes “wet”.

Clearly, an Acolyte who wishes to uncover more than the Adeptus Arbites have is going to have to go undercover. Finding rags that will serve as serf clothing isn’t difficult—learning to emulate the downcast eyes and subservient movements of the denizens of the Harrow is. Acolytes will be at a **–10 to Disguise Tests** to appear as a serf unless they come from a very similar background. PCs will also have to get used to the local economy, which consists of a wide range of chips and lumps from a variety of different ores, whose value a native of Sepheris Secundus can identify at a glance.

So what do the locals know that they aren’t telling?

Any Acolyte wishing to question the locals should make a **Routine (+20) Inquiry Test**. How much they pass the Test by will determine how much they manage to learn.

Standard Success

The Broken Chains were once a popular underground movement that a large number of serfs had joined when Baron Ulbrexis was leading it. However, after the first massacre, which was perpetuated by Morirr but publicly blamed on Ulbrexis, the group lost support because the majority of the faithful were forced underground.

One Degree of Success

When the Broken Chains first reappeared, many serfs embraced them with open arms until the true nature of the present incarnation of the organisation became evident. The Broken Chains isn't interested in better rights for serfs—it's a terrorist organization bent on bringing mutants into power by violence. The serfs of the Harrow can clearly see this, though the Broken Chains' propaganda claims otherwise.

Two or More Degrees of Success

Many serfs may have known a number of the members of the Broken Chains as they are, in the main, exiles or mutants from the Harrow and the small mutant community, known as the Hard Vaults, that lives beneath it. The existence of the Hard Vaults may come as a shock to an Acolyte not thoroughly briefed on the ways of Sepheris Secundus where underground communities of exiled mutants are fairly common. The mutant with the metallic skin seen accompanying the Broken Chains in several of the pict-captures that the Adeptus Arbites possess can be identified as a former ore smelter named Throgel.

Once they have heard about Throgel they can ask after him. One or more degrees of success on any positive Interaction Test will reveal that he had been widely famed throughout the Harrow for his ability to withstand great amounts of heat long before his mutant nature was revealed.

Give the Acolytes time to try and gather as much of this information as possible. After allowing for a few days of research and undercover work, move on to Horror First Hand.

HORROR FIRST HAND

Less than a week after the Acolytes arrive on Sepheris Secundus, the Broken Chains strike again. Wherever the various PCs are, they all feel the blast, though it isn't particularly loud... Acolytes in the op-centre feel the building sway as the cliff walls holding the support girders shudder, while those anywhere within the Harrow feel the ground beneath them ripple as though a large earthquake has just struck (or a massive vehicle has just driven past). Large plumes of dust rise from two of the larger deep mine shafts leading into the north-eastern wall of the Harrow. The whispers of hundreds of thousands of serfs fearfully declaring that the mutants have struck again echo about the mine works, swiftly followed by the resonate crack of whips as Baron Alswere's overseers attempt to restore order. Acolytes within the op-centre will be asked if they wish to accompany the

arbitrators responding to the attack. Those agreeing will be piled into an Adeptus Arbites' patrol vehicle, a swift moving hovercraft capable of carrying around six people, accompanied by Rotlan and Mallier. Those on the ground will have to push their way through masses of milling serfs in order to get to the bombed site.

The scene is a chaotic one with serfs calling out as they try to find friends and loved ones buried by the rubble of the partially collapsed mines, punctuated by the barking of overseers as they attempt to organise a search. It is difficult to see anything at first because of the great clouds of dust still filling the air. Slowly the dust settles, allowing the Acolytes to make their way through the crowd of panicked serfs and shouting overseers.

As the Acolytes move forward, they can see that the first of the two mines goes back some twenty metres before abruptly ending at a cracked but solid-looking wall. The wall appears to be composed of marble—completely unlike the rock walls of the mine. The marble wall completely bisects the mineshaft, as if it had “materialised” in place, effectively cutting the mineshaft in two. Any Acolyte with either **Trade (Miner or Prospector)** or **Demolition** will immediately note that mines do not naturally collapse in such a way—even a mine that crumpled due to a conventional bomb blast would be filled with the broken ruins of stone and earth. A **Routine (+20) Perception Test** will detect that the blockage and the wall to the right of the corridor meet in a smooth line, without separation or any sort of meeting point differentiating the two materials—meaning that the wall is now literally part of the shaft, somehow moved into place and fused together in some inexplicable fashion.

It is the second mine though, that holds the most gruesome evidence of how twisted the Broken Chains have become. Acolytes approaching the second mine will find it surrounded by a semi-circle of serfs that have clearly backed away from the entrance. Many of them are making the sign of the aquila on their chest and several of them are sobbing hysterically. An Acolyte entering the mine doesn't have to go far to discover why. A long column of stone has “collapsed” through the shaft at approximately a forty-five degree angle. Sixty or seventy serfs have become “fused” with the stone. Legs, arms and torsos emerge from the rock. There is no blood—the bodies are literally “merged” with the stone.

At this point, all Acolytes who wish to venture deeper into the mine must make a **Willpower Test against Disturbing Fear**. Those that succeed and who continue further, see a woman some twenty metres down the corridor who's left arm and part of her torso are also fused within the rock. Her right arm waves frantically, gesticulating to the

Acolytes. She tries to mouth words, but can barely speak as she attempts to convey something to any Acolyte nearby. The woman is trying to say, “*Words on the face*”. It will take a **Hard (–20) Perception Test** to grasp the dying serf’s message, though an Acolyte with **Lip Reading** instead takes the **Test as Challenging**. A psyker with the appropriate abilities may be able to glean a clearer message from the serf or surroundings. The Broken Chains, specifically Morirr, had carved eldritch runes into the mine face before levelling it with his warp-touched demolition devices. The serfs in the shaft saw the markings flare into brilliance moments before the bomb went off. A **Psyniscience Test** will indicate that the area around the damaged mines has been somehow “twisted” by the warp. Acolytes with occult experience may strongly suspect that the bombing wasn’t an act of terror, but a sacrifice of some sort to the Ruinous Powers—they’re correct.

The Adeptus Arbites soon take charge of the mines, ordering all serfs to remove themselves.

Rotlan notes that experience has shown them that forcing serfs to clear the bodies from the mine leads to serious morale problems. Their standard procedure now is to use servitors to clear what remains can be readily removed, then to call in members of the Disassemblers Guild to wipe out any traces of a compromised mine. Eventually, Mallier notes that they want to bring in priests to bless and consecrate the tainted mines before their reopening is approved.

When the Acolytes have had their fill, you are ready to move the story along. At this point, a number of different potential avenues of investigation are available to the PCs. If they’ve managed to recognise the pattern of the Broken Chains attacks, then they have about three days, before the section Wrong Place, Right Time would occur, in which to look into other leads. Investigating the old headquarters of the Broken Chains or the Hard Vaults will lead to either Ulbrexis’s Hunch or the Talking to Mutants sections.



ULBREXIS'S HUNCH

The Acolytes may wish to follow up Ulbrexis's assertion that a few of the Broken Chains attacks look like they might have been directed from a specific section of the under-way beneath some of the deep shaft mines just to the north of the Harrow's centre. Adeptus Arbites records note that all but one of the attacks that occurred in the area that Ulbrexis specified happened close to two years ago, not long after the Broken Chains first reappeared. The last attack took place six months previously. Characters checking up on this assault will find out an interesting fact—the last attack was the first on record to use the “matter-shifting” bombs.

If the characters wish to follow this up, the baron will lead them into the mines to investigate the site. Ulbrexis states that it will take them more than an hour (thus a two hour round trip) to get where he intends to lead them, presuming it isn't blocked off, and he suggests that the Acolytes plan accordingly. Clever PCs might gather together some equipment before wandering into the mines, such as aero-sifters, which are used to detect the presence of harmful gases within the deeper shafts. If they do not, the baron will suggest these important pieces of gear before they head out.

When they are ready to go, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The Baron takes the lead, telling you he knows the quickest way to the site. Instead of heading towards the ruined shafts, he takes you to one of the poppet heads connected to a functional nearby mine. *“This is the best way in,”* Ulbrexis assures you. *“We will go deep into one of the older shafts and then search for an old passageway that I once used regularly, which was fashioned and concealed by the original Broken Chains.”*

If the Acolytes wish to bring any of the arbitrators with them, they'll have an interesting time explaining how the “old guy” knows all this. . .

As the Acolytes first descend into the depths of one of the Harrow's deep shafts, describe the feeling of great weight pressing down about them as they steadily sink deeper under the planet's surface. The air smells heavily of earth and sediment, with dust motes ever present. The chiselling of countless serfs echoes through the mineshaft through which they descend, as does, at first, the groaning of the serfs who power their elevator. Many of the upper levels are dark and abandoned, but as they near the bottom of the

shaft, the Acolytes pass several levels that are dimly lit and filled with toiling serfs. Eventually, the elevator reaches the bottom of the shaft, nearly 300 meters below the surface. Ulbrexis shines an electric torch out into the shaft which illuminates a series of what appears to be little triangular-shaped stones which slowly begin scuttling for the shadows. *“Dust crabs. Serf delicacy,”* Ulbrexis says as he steps forward. Small clicking sounds fill the dark shaft as the Dust Crabs slowly withdraw in time with his advance.

Acolytes from hive worlds have no trouble following the baron; in fact, they probably feel more at home here than they have in a while. Acolytes from any other type of world, though, must make a **Routine (+20) Willpower Test** or be at a –5 penalty to any Skill or Test that requires them to concentrate as they remain unnerved by the oppressive underground atmosphere. The penalty lasts until they are once again above ground.

The journey is uneventful, though quite disturbing for most Acolytes. Dust Crabs abound, filling the darkness with disquieting clicking sounds. The shored-up walls of the shaft creak and shed dust occasionally. A few corridors vibrate with the resonance of mines being worked on above. Ulbrexis seems sure of his course, only pausing briefly to get his bearings whenever the group reaches one of the several junctions along the way. After forty minutes or so have passed, Ulbrexis stops within a small natural cavern with several branching corridors. Instead of heading down one of the corridors, though, he walks to a large support strut that appears to have been reinforced with metal shielding. Ulbrexis knocks on the metal several times, winks at the Acolytes and then places several fingers into what appears to be a crack within the support; part of the shielding slides up and away smoothly as he does so, revealing a large shaft with a metal ladder leading upwards.

Ulbrexis states that the ladder should lead them up some 40 meters, terminating in a small room with a maintenance hatch that leads to one of the Broken Chains' concealed bases. *“It doesn't look like it has been used in a long time. But then again, I'm one of the few that ever knew about this particular back door. Unfortunately, there's only enough space for three in the room above.”* After the Acolytes work out who is going to ascend the shaft, they'll find the hatch to the room above. The old baron notes that the door above only needs to be unlatched from this side, so he doesn't necessarily have to be the one to do it, though he is willing to do so. He suggests that whoever opens the door should do so carefully, just in case his old bolt-hole has occupants (which it does). At this point have PCs take a **Hard (–20) Perception Test** to hear the music the mutants are listening to—that, however, is

MUTANT THUGS

The mutant outcasts that the Broken Chains now attracts believe (with good cause) that they have very little worth living for. These wretches are so violent that they were thrown-out of the Hard Vaults for being too vicious. All of the mutants in the room are killers and will fight to the death if pressed.

Profiles for the Mutant Thugs and their suggested mutations can be found on page 129.

likely to be one of the last things on the mind of whoever first gazes into the old Broken Chains base though...

The maintenance hatch opens onto a mind-jarring sight: a small group of brown-robed people sit listening to a vox-recording of Bronzine's Malis Curai symphony beneath what can only be described as a spatial "impossibility". The room's "ceiling" appears to open up to a starry sky. The angles of the room seem somehow wrong, making you feel sick and disorientated.

Acolytes looking within the room must make **Willpower Test against Disturbing Fear** as their minds attempt to encompass the spatial distortions of the room along with the grotesque physical distortions of the mutants. Fortunately for the Acolytes, even if one or more of them should fail the Test, the mutants are unlikely to be alerted as they are distracted by the music and they have been drinking. Still, have the PC closest to the hatch take an **Easy (+20) Silent Move Test** against the mutant's Awareness of 15. Success means that their trespass goes unnoticed. However, failure causes the mutants to reach for their weapons, ready to defend themselves.

If the **Willpower (and Silent Move if necessary) Test** is passed, read or paraphrase the following:

The support structures lining the eastern walls of the room have clearly been altered or removed and there are hints of mining operations; tools and broken bits of stonework are scattered over the floor. The people in the room are clearly mutants, their robes failing to hide their grotesque deformities. They sit about on makeshift furniture formed from discarded bits of mine equipment, drinking a foul smelling liquor. All of them appear to have some sort of weapon near to hand—mostly autoguns and a few clubs.

The hatch is only big enough for the Acolytes to enter the room two abreast—if the mutants are not alerted to the Acolytes' presence, they suffer from the effects of Surprise for the first Round of the fight. There are a number of mutants equal to the number of Acolytes in the party plus four (unless the Acolytes have brought along the arbitrators as backup—in which case increase their numbers proportionately). Note that the mutants all suffer -5 to their Weapon and Ballistic Skills and -5 to their Initiative rolls due to their inebriation.

If the Acolytes manage to capture a live prisoner, they will only gain useful information if they succeed with an Intimidate Test. If the mutant prisoner is scared enough, he will say that the group had been given orders to guard this particular base until called upon to assist in a Broken Chains "liberation" operation—although, he has no idea about what was going to be "liberated". The prisoner knows that there are other hidden bases, but not how to find them. Any surviving mutant will proudly declare that Assod Morirr is his leader, as well as making rambling statements about how the dominion of humanity is at an end upon Sepheris Secundus—though the details of this statement are somewhat hazy about how exactly such a thing is to be accomplished. If questioned about the distortions and impossible geometry of the base, the prisoner will declare that it has *"always been this way"*. From looking at the mutant's provisions, there appears to be enough to have sustained the group for about a month. The mutant prisoner does not know much else of any value except how to get out of the base. An astute Acolyte will have noticed at some point that there doesn't seem to be any means of exiting the cavern. While there are a few twists and turns about the indistinct cavern walls, none of them suggests an opening. When questioned, the mutant indicates that there is a door on one side of the cavern. Walking through it a person will come out in a small alcove about three yards across, situated in the roof of an abandoned deep shaft mine at one of the Harrow's mid-levels. The mutants have a few cables and some metal pins fashioned into the wall to facilitate coming and going.

A psyker can make a Psyniscience Test to discern the general location of the door, or the exact location if they succeed by two or more degrees of success. Otherwise, the Acolytes will have to fumble about for 1d10 minutes until one of them finds an area of rock where their hand appears to pass straight through it. A successful **Routine (+20) Willpower Test** will allow an Acolyte to walk through a "solid" wall. A PC that fails the Test cannot go through the wall without gaining 1 Insanity Point. Traversing the wall gives one the sensation of swimming through thick mud or sludge for a few seconds. Acolytes that manage to make it through the wall find that it is exactly as the mutants have said. The small alcove that serves as the base's porch appears to be an abandoned shaft when observed from the floor of the mine. The sounds of serfs scraping the rock-face in the distance become audible to any character that walks through the wall. It would take Ulbrexis, or someone else familiar with the Harrow, less

than five minutes to navigate a route back to an unobstructed mine shaft from the warped Broken Chains base. Trigger-happy Acolytes who killed all the mutants before any of them could be questioned are in for an hour of careful exploring to find the hidden door, or are otherwise forced to retrace their steps.

Ulbrexis barely recognises his old base. The entirety has been transformed since his day and then seemingly broken away from whatever it was designed for at some point. The single undistorted wall has a series of broken support struts that are nearly identical to those found in the Serrated Query's processing lab on Ambulon from *Rejoice For You Are True*. Acolytes who haven't played through that adventure can strain their eyes studying the minutely engraved carvings on the remaining support

beams if they wish. It takes an **Ordinary (+10) Forbidden Lore (Warp) Test** to glean any meaning from the intricate glyphs. Any level of success will indicate that the markings are not associated with any of the Chaos powers, only the immaterium itself. The mining operations around the wall have clearly been used to break up the materials utilised in producing the spatial distortion effect. It doesn't take much of a leap of logic to suspect that the missing metal is somehow being incorporated into the Broken Chains' new explosive devices, though how or why such technology was brought to Sepheris Secundus in the first place is still a mystery.

Whether they walk all the way back around or quickly traverse their way back to the Harrow via the Broken Chains door, there is nothing else for them to do here.



THE LOYAL MUTANTS OF THE HARD VAULTS

Acolytes familiar with some of the more unsavoury practices of the Imperium, such as regular mutant pogroms, would doubtless be somewhat surprised to learn that a large number of mutant communities thrive on Sepheris Secundus. Compared to the majority of serfs, many of the mutant communities are actually not much worse off, though their living conditions are far more difficult. The mutants are only allowed to live in places where others cannot or will not so their environs tend to be radioactive, toxic, on the verge of collapse or just plain dangerous. Acolytes questioning the Adeptus Arbites about the mutants will be told that the official policy is to leave them be, as long as they avoid regular contact with the serfs, never mind that the bulk of the superstitious serf populace would set a torch to a mutant the second they realised what it was without a second thought. Furthermore, actually getting to where the mutants live is a difficult prospect. Nevertheless, Rotlan indicates that several members of the local mutant community, the Hard Vaults, were

hunted down and forcefully questioned about their involvement in the Broken Chains' recent activities. Though he found it difficult to believe, the mutants eventually convinced the Proctor that they were innocent, though several had to die first. The Adeptus Arbites consider the matter ongoing but, without further information, a low priority. Mallier will indicate that they still have their suspicions that some radical elements within the Hard Vaults are aiding the Broken Chains, but no solid evidence. The arbitrators are (politely) unwilling to expend any further resources on dealing with the mutants without new facts coming to light. Their reluctance is also tinged by the simple fact that it takes many difficult and dangerous hours of travel deep into the most hazardous parts of the Harrow's underways in order to find the series of caverns that serves as the central hub of the Hard Vaults.

What has been successfully hidden from the Adeptus Arbites is that the mutants of the Hard Vaults are far more educated than most. Indeed, Ulbrexis had an active alliance with them—a fact he will only admit to if events so far have led him to trust the PCs. Otherwise, he'll claim to know little about the mutants. If a group of trusted Acolytes wish to talk to the mutants, Ulbrexis will agree to help them do it, but the first thing he'll state, with a wink is,

OLION, MUTANT NEGOTIATOR

Olion was born a mutant and has spent the majority of his life in the Hard Vaults, though his position as a liaison to the outside world has given him a breadth of experience that his otherwise somewhat "sheltered" compatriots lack. Olion also came into his own during the days of "Saint Ulbrexis" who secretly encouraged literacy among both the serfs and the mutant populace of the Harrow. Olion, like many of the denizens of the Hard Vaults, is a devout believer in the God-Emperor and, as unbelievable as it may seem, loyal to the Imperium. Olion puts on a tough front, but he is actually somewhat frightened of outsiders as his experience is that they will hurt or betray mutants without a second thought. This has made him cautious in his dealings with others. Olion has functional clusters of eyes on either side of his face, making him somewhat difficult to look at and near impossible to surprise.

Olion's profile can be found on [page 128](#).



"We don't need to go down. They come up." Ulbrexis explains that several of the leaders of the Hard Vaults used to regularly ascend to the surface amidst the Harrow's mine refuse, known as the Spoil, to do business with those willing to deal in exceedingly valuable minerals, no questions asked. Since the moons are moving into the appropriate alignment—which signifies that the mutants will be "about", Ulbrexis indicates that they should be able to have an audience with one or more of the present leaders of the Hard Vaults on the following night, if the Acolytes are willing to do so.

The following evening finds the Acolytes wishing to accompany Ulbrexis waiting amongst the piles of rubble of the Spoil. Read aloud or paraphrase the following to help set the scene:

You find yourself standing in an area of desolation with broken piles of rubble and dark mine shafts scattered about all around. The baron motions to the positioning of the loads, *"Notice how they match the stars,"* he intones before looking up. You can see that the seemingly random piles of rubble reflect the positioning of the stars in the constellation of Saint Severine, Patron of Enlightened Sufferers. *"It means we are in the right spot."*

Ulbrexis will discuss with the Acolytes how much they wish to reveal to the mutants. He states that he believes he should tell them who he is, as the mutants are unlikely to be willing to help without knowing his identity, though if the Acolytes are strongly against this, he will keep his identity a secret.

As you wait, two of Sepheris Secundus's three moons set, and the wan light of the third falls upon three darkly clad figures emerging from a mound of rubble near the edge of the Spoil. All three are tightly wrapped in bandages and shrouded in dark grey cloaks. One, shorter than the other two, steps forward with his arms folded inside his robe. His cowl is pulled low over his face, obscuring his features from view, but his voice is pleasant enough as he intones with a formal sounding cadence, *"What brings you here, sirs?"*

If the Acolytes have elected to do the talking, let them make their pitch. The leader of the mutants is called Olion, while the other two are his bodyguards. Olion is no fool by any stretch and used to dealing with shady customers. When the characters ask for information

regarding the Broken Chains or Assod Morirr, Olion will be apt to suspect a trap unless they are very persuasive. Olion's disposition makes any **Interaction Skill Tests Difficult (-10)**, the PCs will have to win him over if they wish to get any useful information. Thrones helps persuade him, but good equipment or food stores are even more convincing. Presuming they do talk him round, Olion states that his people have nothing to do with the Broken Chains, but they are aware that a large new attack within the Harrow is imminent, mostly likely within the next three days. He declares that the Hard Vaults despise Assod Morirr and that members of his brethren attempted to kill the terrorist unsuccessfully on several occasions. Their reason for detesting Morirr is simple: they're afraid his actions will bring the wrath of the Inquisition down upon them all. Olion is unwilling to reveal anything else and, seeing as the Acolytes aren't likely to be interested in the ores he has sell, he'll bid them good evening and a good luck before departing to find those that are interested in his business. The Acolytes can observe him in such dealings, but for once these deals are just what they seem and they will have to leave with what they have learned.

If the Acolytes let Ulbrexis reveal himself, the conversation goes differently. Read out or paraphrase the following:

Ulbrexis responds to Olion's initial question with a *"Destiny, I suppose."* He then steps forward, pulling back his cowl. The mutant is taken aback at first, but slowly recognition sweeps over him. He mutters in a strangled whisper, *"This... this cannot be... my Lord Baron?"* Ulbrexis slowly nods. The two mutants behind Olion reverently make the sign of the aquila. The mutant pulls back his own cowl, revealing a face with clusters of eyes on either side of it. Tears flow freely from his many eyes. *"They said... they said you were killed. Executed."* Ulbrexis shakes his head and Olion whispers, *"Praise be to the Emperor."*

Olion will now go into far greater detail in his answers to the Acolytes' questions. He states that after Ulbrexis was taken, Morirr didn't reappear for several years, during which time he had apparently taken up with a group of shady mercenary off-worlders. Olion doesn't know the name "Serrated Query" but showing him a picture of their symbol, the questioning mark that cuts, will get instant recognition from him, *"Yes, that is their sigil."* Recently, within the last year, Morirr had a falling out of some kind

TALKING TO MUTANTS

Acolytes that subscribe to a more Puritanical viewpoint are likely to address this section (that is, if they bother at all) in a completely different way than a more Radically minded group. Some may declare that the very idea of coming into contact with mutants on any but a violent basis is so repugnant that they want no part of it. Others with similar viewpoints may be more adroit at stomach-aching their contempt and proceeding. Adjust the mutant interactions, if any, with the PCs accordingly.

with the mercenaries and apparently betrayed them in some fashion. Apparently, Morirr has taken up an active interest in the occult and begun practicing unnatural rituals that may help explain the mutant's inability to kill him. Olion states that one of his mates cut Morirr's arm off in a tunnel fight and a week later, Morirr was seen with his arm intact. Ulbrexis questions the mutant thoroughly on this point, asking several times in different fashion, "Are you sure that it is Assod Morirr?" Olion knows all this because he has managed to place a spy amidst the ranks of the Broken Chains.

Olion is desperately curious about why Ulbrexis has returned and what it portends for the Harrow, as well as the identities of his compatriots. Ulbrexis says that he cannot discuss what his plans are, but tells the mutant that he and the Acolytes, "Have come to stop Morirr." Olion, who is skilled at reading between the lines, puts it all

together, realises what this truly means and turns visibly pale even by the wan light of the single moon as he regards the PCs with his many-globed eyes. He collapses to the ground facing the Acolytes, hands folded together in supplicatory fashion and says, "I know who you are Lords, or at least, what you represent. Please, we are loyal to the Emperor, we stay below as ordered. We only make deals above for supplies and medicines. We will do whatever we can to assist you in stopping the Broken Chains. Have mercy on us." Thus, the Acolytes may have just found themselves some unexpected allies, which could come in handy very soon. Olion once again emphasizes that a large attack is sure to be coming and will readily agree to pass on anything relevant that he manages to uncover via vox to Ulbrexis. He also notes in an emotional voice, "Your return will bring hope to many who have long lived without it, my Lord Baron."



WRONG PLACE, RIGHT TIME

Depending on the diligence, skills and possible open-mindedness of the Acolytes, along with some luck, they should have an idea at this point where the Broken Chains intend to strike next. If one of the Acolytes managed to discern the mystical pattern underlying the attacks, then they'll be fairly certain that the next bombing should occur within a cluster of deep shaft mines slightly to the south of the Adeptus Arbites's op-centre. Ulbrexis will note that the area is named Hazael's Cross. The Acolytes may also have reason to suspect that the attacks are not just the activities of terrorists, but are in fact part of some kind of sacrifice to the Ruinous Powers.

Early in the morning of the day that will see the Broken Chains' latest attack, any psyker in the group awakens to the sensation of something warm pouring down their face and over their chest. Blood is freely flowing from their nostrils and gums. The air itself feels charged with malevolence and the urge to vomit is near overwhelming. The bleeding stops shortly after they awaken, leaving them none the worse for wear, though in desperate need of a shower. A **Routine (+20) Psyniscience Test** will detect a massive distortion of realspace throughout the Harrow, though it is difficult to pinpoint any central location for the disturbance. However, if the psyker passes the Test by three or more degrees of success, they will be able to determine that the disturbance appears to be centred at Hazael's Cross.

So forewarned, the Acolytes finally get their chance to confront the leader of the Broken Chains. Proctor Rotlan and a squad of ten arbitrators are prepared to support the Acolytes within the tunnels, though the relatively constricted dimensions of Hazael's Cross make it difficult to bring a particularly large force to bear. However, the rest of the arbitrators within the Harrow are on standby to assist if called. Captain Movern of the Royal Scourges insists on participating (if he's been notified). He is willing to wait nearby, so long as he and his men can immediately join the fight once it's on.

Hazael's Cross is a high natural cavern that serves as a juncture for a number of different mines, several of which have abandoned, but the majority of which are filled with toiling serfs. The cavern is some 80 meters across, with more than a dozen openings to different mines on four levels, the highest of which is the first tier and leads to the surface, the lowest being the fourth and bottom tier. Each level is approximately 10 meters tall. A series of scaffolds, ladders and a crude lift allow for travelling up and down the central chamber. Good place to set off a bomb, great place to have a multi-tiered fight.

According to witnesses, the Broken Chains' typical *modus operandi* is to emerge from nowhere and begin shooting randomly, causing the serfs to panic. They usually set off a bomb less than a minute after they first appear, though no one has yet survived to witness how the devices are actually detonated. The arbitrators suspect extensive use of the underway, but if the Acolytes followed Ulbrexis's hunch and shared what they found with the locals, they are now uncertain as to just how widespread the Broken Chains "unseen" bases may be, making it difficult to determine where exactly that they come from. Regardless, they tend to strike fast and hard, using confusion and fear to their advantage, before swiftly retreating. The Acolytes can plan to be anywhere they wish. Some may want to don serfs' robes and conceal themselves amidst the mine's workers. Others may elect to pass themselves off as passing overseers, or to hide within one of the larger ore buckets inside the cavern. Note down their choices, specifically what tier they choose to be on, as they may very well have the advantage of Surprise the first Round after the mutant terrorists attack. Rotlan is willing to conceal himself along with the Acolytes, but he wants his men to be fully armoured to withstand attacks. He suggests having them in a side passage, near the mine's entrance as the one certainty of the Broken Chains' attacks is that they come from below. The baron will stay in a side passage near the third tier, awaiting Morirr to show himself.

At precisely noon, two small, unexpected explosions shake Hazael's Cross causing the serfs to stop their work. In the stillness that follows, members of the Broken Chains rush into the mine on both the second and fourth tiers. The explosions have opened breaches through which the mutants entered the mine cavern. There are around thirty mutant terrorists in all, broken into two larger

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

While a psyker is the obvious choice, if one of the Acolytes has lost a loved one in the past, they are also a prime candidate for a revelatory dream that comes to them early in the evening. In the dream, they're sitting on a log in the midst of a beautiful forest that stretches off in all directions. Their dead loved one walks up and sits down next to them. "You see that?" they note, pointing out a multi-coloured snake. Once the Acolyte notices it, their loved one pulls a knife from nowhere and hurls it at the snake, bisecting it. "No good, see? It's the head or nothing..." The snake continues to move on, unaffected by the loss of its tail. The loved one smiles, "Not all heads are equal though." A massive snake erupts from the ground behind the loved one and bites them in half through the torso. The Acolyte sits up awake in a cold sweat.



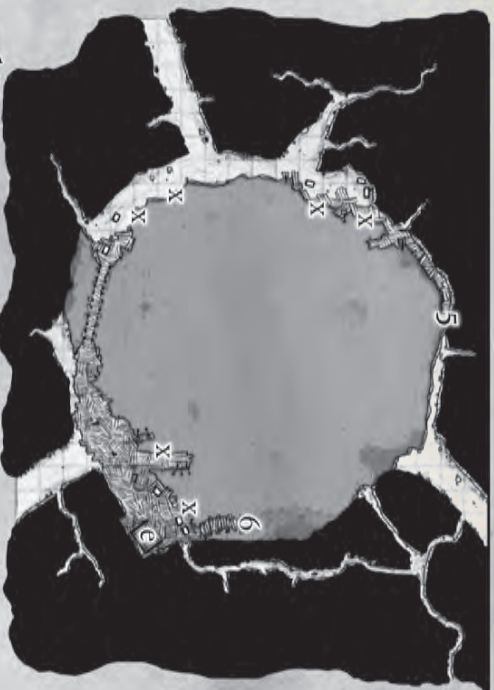
HAZAEEL'S CROSS



Key

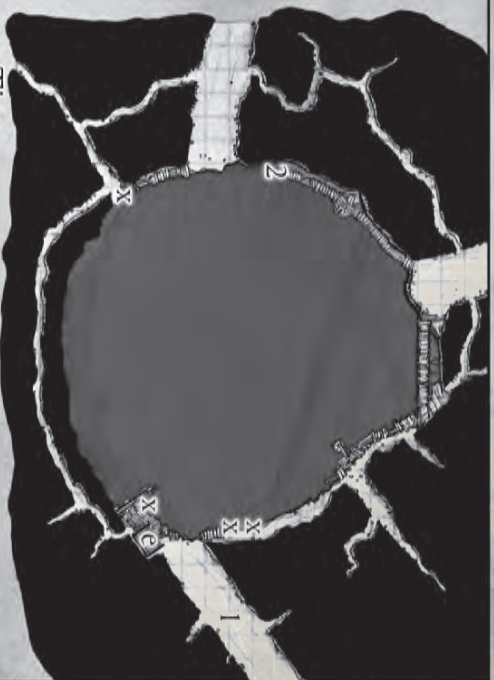
- 1 = Tunnel out
- 2 = Scaffold down to 2nd Tier
- 3 = Scaffold up to 1st Tier
- 4 = Scaffold down to 3rd Tier
- 5 = Scaffold up to 2nd Tier
- 6 = Scaffold down to 4th Tier
- 7 = Scaffold up to 3rd Tier
- 8 = Cavern Bottom
- x = Ladder Down
- e = Elevator

□ = 5x5 Metres



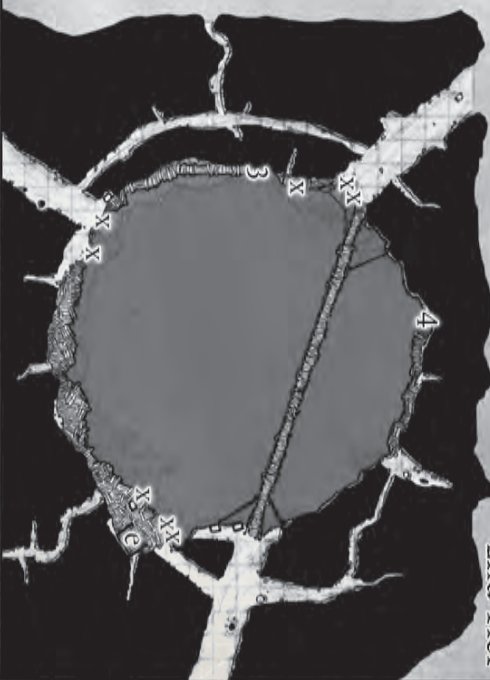
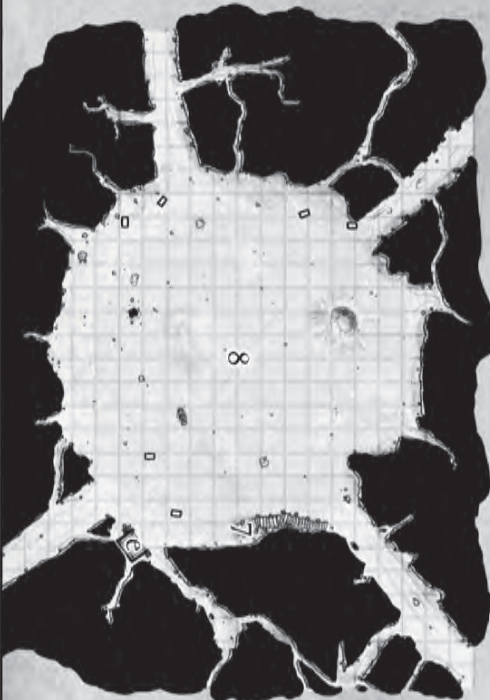
3rd Tier

4th Tier



1st Tier

2nd Tier



Map Ref: 1002573



52/34/CS ANNE
The Harrow
Cartopact 732/661/5012

III: BARON HOPES

A BLUEPRINT FOR MADNESS

Assod Morirr once believed, as Ulbrexis still does, that humans and mutants could live together. He joined Baron Ulbrexis's rebellion with the best of intentions and his first year working for the Broken Chains was the best of his life. But eventually the shine wore off and Morirr realised that Ulbrexis would never be willing to go far enough to realise his dream. Morirr became bitter and began quietly fomenting rebellion within the ranks of the Broken Chains. He was soon approached by an old, blind mutant seer who suggested that there were others more suited to help Morirr carry out his own plans. Morirr made a Dark Pact with a Daemonic entity that the seer helped him contact and arranged for the infamous attack that ended the first incarnation of the Broken Chains and resulted in his "death" at Ulbrexis's hands. Fortunately for Morirr, surviving to see his dream realised was what he had demanded of the powers of the warp.

Morirr licked his wounds and waited for a new opportunity, which he found when approached by an agent of the Serrated Query. Morirr assisted them on various matters and soon became a favoured agent. Soon Eloeholth the Faceless himself began visiting Sepheris Secundus from time to time and built or modified several of the Broken Chains' old bases to accommodate the Query's business. Over the years Assod Morirr has fully embraced the worship of the Chaos Gods and has come to believe that Eloeholth has set himself against the Ruinous Powers and thus become his foe. Less than a year ago, Morirr turned his back on Eloeholth, calling him "the apostate," and embarked on his own plan for the glory of Chaos. Using explosive devices constructed from metal removed from Eloeholth's extra-dimensionally constructed rooms, Morirr has been systematically ripping open holes in realspace as he sacrifices serfs by the hundreds to the Dark Gods. His pattern is near completion. Morirr believes that very soon the Harrow will be one with the warp and anything that manages to survive will swiftly be mutated beyond recognition.

groups—though if the PCs have enlisted the help of the Royal Scourges, there can just as easily be another twenty terrorists. Assod Morirr is on the bottom tier accompanied by the hulking mutant Throgel, while Raze is on the second tier. Throgel carries a bomb on his back in a large canvas bag. An **Easy (+30) Perception Test** will spot it if any Acolyte declares they're looking at Throgel.

See The Broken Chains sidebar for further information about the mutant terrorists.

The Broken Chains boldly rush in using the tactics they've all but perfected over the last two years. The serfs panic and begin running in every direction. And then it all goes wrong for the mutants as the concealed Acolytes and their allies open up on the Broken Chains. Despite the surprise, Morirr has become supremely overconfident and arrogant in his seeming indestructibility. While somewhat taken aback, he and Throgel proceed to advance to the centre of Hazael's Cross to set up his device which, if unopposed, they will do so within seven Rounds. Acolytes who can see Morirr roll as normal to shoot at him, but their shots seem to impact without noticeable effect—the bullets puncture his skin, but don't slow him down!

After three Rounds, Ulbrexis emerges on the third tier and stares down. "*MORIRR!*" he roars in a voice that shakes the cavern. Morirr spins and looks up. Complete and utter dread washes over his face. Anyone within viewing

range of Morirr can see that he is completely terrified of Ulbrexis. Throgel immediately leaps between Morirr and Ulbrexis, opening up on the former baron with his gun, as do a number of the mutant terrorists.

The fight will continue either until Morirr is absolutely certain that he will not be able to set off the device or until he succeeds in doing so. His terror at the appearance of Ulbrexis will make his hands a bit unsteady but he will press on with setting the device regardless. If he succeeds, the device literally sinks through the cavern floor and he yells for a retreat. It is possible, though hard, to destroy the bomb. It cannot be defused but if it takes a total of 12 points of Damage it will be rendered useless. Shooting the bomb from anywhere but Point Blank range, however, incurs a -30 penalty to hit. If this occurs Morirr immediately calls for a retreat. The Broken Chains withdraw by running out the way they came in. However, they've set conventional explosives to seal the shafts behind them as they run. If Morirr succeeded in activating the bomb, the Acolytes all have three Rounds to get out of Hazael's Cross or they'll fatally become "one" with the scenery. Any Acolyte that doesn't make it out may burn a Fate Point to be found hours later unconscious at the edge of the blast.

Successful in setting of his bomb or not, Morirr gazes back towards Ulbrexis in shock and anger as he flees...

THE BROKEN CHAINS

THROGEL

Throgel is a hulking monster of a mutant, with skin resembling pitted steel. He once was a famed forge worker, famous among his fellow serfs for his ability to withstand incredible amounts of heat. His famous immunity led to him being ordered to investigate a deep mine shaft for rare ores that was too hot for others to navigate. Some property of the mine, or perhaps something that dwelled within it, changed Throgel. Soon after, as he sat working a forge, he caught on fire. The fire didn't harm him, but it did burn away his clothing and skin, revealing the metal man beneath. He fled to the Hard Vaults, who took him in for a time, but his bitterness eventually led him to accepting an offer from Morirr to enlist with the Broken Chains. Throgel is highly resistant to most forms of damage and virtually immune to heat and fire-based weapons.



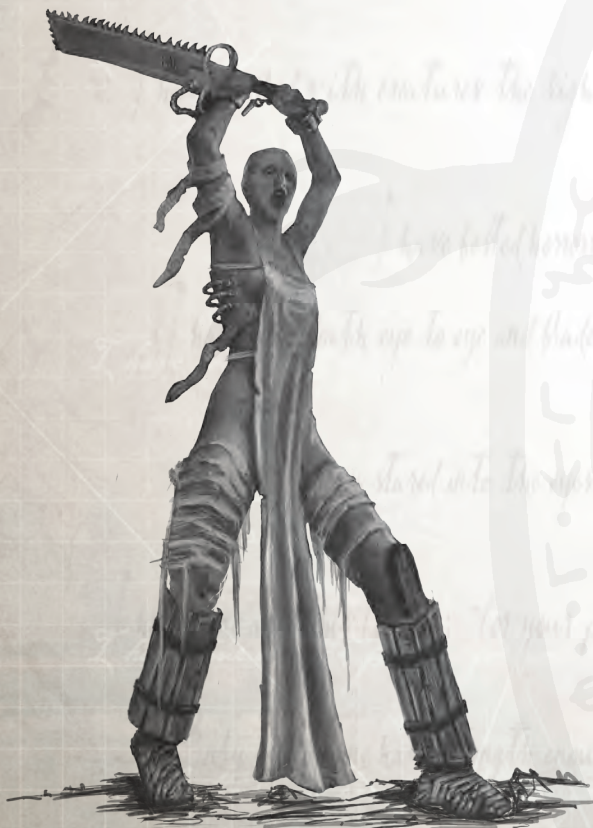
ASSOD MORIRR, MUTANT CULTIST

Much has been said of Morirr elsewhere. Suffice to say that whatever he once was, Morirr has since become a ruthless psychotic and devout cultist of the warp. The corruption caused by his dark pact and worship of the Chaos Powers has altered his mind to the point that he is no longer certain why he wants to accomplish the destruction of realspace within the Harrow, only that he must do so. His Dark Pact grants him invulnerability to harm of any sort. He suffers no pain and regenerates all Damage. However, the terms of his pact state that he is vulnerable to the blood of the one that first sent him across, meaning Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis. Since Ulbrexis was "executed" without any heirs, Morirr has been convinced for over a decade that there is nothing in the universe that can stop his eventual victory—hence his terror at the appearance of Ulbrexis. Morirr will be convinced that the Acolytes have been sent by his former master to kill him, which will lead to him deciding to proceed with a dire ritual which he has thus far been unwilling to use.

Morirr is short, though stockily built. He once grew his hair long; the better to conceal his eyes, but now shaves his head bald, as he no longer cares what others may think. His eyes close vertically instead of horizontally and he can see perfectly well in pitch dark.

RAZE

Raze knew from an early age that she was special, certainly more special than the other children around her. The daughter of a minor noble functionary, Raze grew up surrounded by some of the best indulgences that Sepheris Secundus had to offer, but it was never enough. Her search for new and interesting experiences lead her to trying the drug spook which permanently awoke something within her. Her burgeoning psychic abilities caused her to regard the world about her with new eyes, though her family attempting to kill her may also have had an influence. Regardless, she fled to the only place she could think of to hide from the Imperium, amidst the mutants, where Morirr, who quickly inducted her to the service of the Serrated Query, discovered her. Her loyalty, though, was always with Morirr and she blindly believes that he truly wishes to accomplish the various things he claims he does. Raze is an accomplished pyrokinetic and a skilled hand-to-hand combatant. She wears little armour in order to remain mobile and cuts her golden hair short so as not to set it on fire.



MUTANT TERRORISTS

Scum of the worst sort, the only mutants who still work for Morirr are truly degenerate in mind, body and spirit. They are ruthless killers, many of which sport particularly ghastly, major mutations.

Profiles for all the Broken Chains can be found on **page 129**.

SAINT ULBREXIS

Whether the Acolytes succeeding in thwarting the Broken Chains' latest attack or not, the identity of Baron Ulbrexis has become known, the truth of his existence passed-on by the serfs who recognised him at Hazael's Cross. Whispers of the return of the "saint" spread through the Harrow like wildfire. By the time the Acolytes and Ulbrexis emerge from the cavern that holds Hazael's Cross, the masses of serfs that come to greet them number in the thousands.

How Proctor Rotlan and his arbitrators react to the presence of Ulbrexis is dependant upon how the Acolytes have been conducting themselves. Technically, the Inquisition has jurisdiction over the prisoner, but the arbitrators still have a death warrant on Ulbrexis. An Acolyte with Common Lore (Adeptus Arbites) may make a **Challenging Test** to know that the death warrant has already been signed-off making their claim on Ulbrexis invalid. Regardless, relations may become a little tense...

Captain Movern and what remains of his squad of Royal Scourges (if they participated in the scene at Hazael's Cross), on the other hand,

immediately attempt to kill Ulbrexis the second his identity is confirmed. If the Royal Scourges didn't participate in the fight with the Broken Chains, then Movern is incensed that he wasn't informed and will also have a full squad of ten men. If Movern is aware that the Acolytes are with the Inquisition, he starts by demanding that they hand the former baron over first, followed by gunplay if they refuse. If not, his men simply open up on Ulbrexis after the characters emerge from the mine. They only get in two Rounds of fighting before the surrounding serfs tear the Royal Scourges to pieces. In either case Ulbrexis should survive, though he may be wounded.

The Acolytes will then have to choose what they're going to do, as they have a lot of options before them. If their relations with the Adeptus Arbites are still good, they can probably force their way through the cheering crowds to return to the op-centre. If not, they may choose to enter the commons, taking their chances with the masses of fanatical serfs. Ironically enough, if they have nowhere else to turn to, they may try to retreat to the Broken Chains' hidden base. It's worth noting that if their relations with Ulbrexis haven't been good, he may decide that the time has come to "lose" the Acolytes at this point. Whatever they choose, they'll probably have a big discussion about what they wish to do next. Let them—whatever they decide to do, they're unlikely to get a chance to carry it out.

WARP ZOMBIES

The Warp Zombies come in all shapes and sizes, reanimated by the foul power of the warp. Each shares a utter hatred for the living, inhuman strength and an absolute desire to kill Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis. Since they are uncertain which mortal is Ulbrexis though, the zombies are opting to kill all the living within the Harrow, just to be sure. These terrorfying warp-spawned creatures are far more than a shambling bag of bones, they are lethal, virtually unstoppable, killing machines.

The profiles for **Warp Zombies** can be found on page 130.



SINS OF THE PAST

As evening falls on the Harrow, a big commotion stirs the masses of serfs hoping to get a glimpse of Saint Ulbrexis returned from the dead. A lay-priest, a woman named Grisha, accompanied by a number of serfs, comes to Ulbrexis (presumably at the op-centre) seeking an audience with him and declaring that a miracle has occurred. Ulbrexis indicates that he remembers Grisha and asks after her children. After responding, Grisha will drop to the floor before Ulbrexis declaring, *"Oh, my Lord Baron, you have returned to us."* He asks what has brought her to him. She declares that a miracle has occurred, a young man who had been dying of a fever was cured when the news of the baron's return was brought to him. The boy's mother and the boy are out in the commons waiting for them.

Ulbrexis asks the Acolytes to accompany him as he goes to see the mother and her son. If they seem reluctant, he notes how religious the serfs of Sepheris Secundus are, which requires some response out of him otherwise the situation could become volatile. He also adds that whilst he does remember Grisha as an honest woman, he expects it may be a trap. Presuming one or more Acolytes accompany him, the serfs make way in order for the party to get near to the mother and son. The serf woman is beside herself with joy declaring, *"My boy has been healed thanks to the baron's grace."* She tells her son to thank the saint. In the light of the torches, the teenager looks pale. While his mother hugs him, the young man slowly repeats the name, *"Ul... brex... is."* He looks at Ulbrexis and his eyes shimmer green with the twisted light of the warp. With a casual tug, he rips his mother's head off and gore sprays about the assembled crowd. The boy considers his mother's cranium for a moment before tossing it aside and advancing towards the former baron. The majority of the serfs in the immediate area begin yelling and trying to flee, while those, that can't see what's just happened, hold them in place as they press forward to find out what's going on. The Acolytes and Ulbrexis will easily blow the stumbling warp-possessed boy apart, as he counts as Surprised for 1d5+1 Rounds. As the corpse hits the ground, the sounds of screaming start erupting through out the Harrow, echoing from the many mine shafts that make up the complex. All of the Acolytes need to make a **Frightening (-10) Fear Test** as they slowly realise just how much trouble they are in.



Assod Morirr in his fear and hatred of Ulbrexis has unleashed a ritual made possible due to the steady weakening of realspace that his bombs have wrought. Morirr has called immaterium spirits to animate the bodies of the dead in order to strike down his mortal enemy. The Harrow is filled with the bodies of dead serfs and mutants. The mutant cultist has called up an army of warp zombies, which are now "rising"—emerging from every mine within a couple of kilometres radius!

There are Warp Zombies emerging everywhere. For every minute that the Acolytes stay in any one place, there is a cumulative 5% chance that they'll be attacked by one or more of the things. Hiding doesn't do any good as the zombies can see the "glow of life" of the living right through other matter. Each time the warp spirits possess the lifeless flesh of a new corpse, they become more and more cunning. Their attacks go from being random to planned as they begin to use weapons and start developing actual tactics. In the midst of the running battle (or escape) have PCs attempt **Ordinary (+10)**

Awareness Tests. Success means that the Acolytes start to notice the Warp Zombies using door handles, opening locks and picking up fallen axes and picks...

HOLING UP

The best places to defend against a zombie apocalypse are the Adeptus Arbites op-centre and Baron Alswere's castle. Unfortunately, the baron's castle is sealed tight and the Acolytes' relations with the arbitrators may be strained by earlier events. The gravity of the situation will lead Rotlan to temporarily set aside any misgivings he may have about the Acolytes and Ulbrexis. Survive they must, for as bleak as things look, time is on their side. What the Acolytes don't know is that Morirr's time is short. The power to unleash the ritual came at a high cost: Morirr must ensure that his enemies fall, or his own spirit is forfeit to the warp and his Daemonic patron.

RUNNING THE BATTLE

The climax of this adventure is composed of three distinct scenes: the escape of the Acolytes and Ulbrexis to the op-centre; the initial Warp Zombie attack on the op-centre; and the final confrontation between Morirr and Ulbrexis.

The initial escape to the op-centre should be fast-paced, chaotic and confusing. The Acolytes should have little time to fully appreciate the situation—all they know is that Warp Zombies are appearing from all around, killing anyone they come across. As the Acolytes run for the relative safety of the op-centre, emphasize the panic of hundreds of serfs running this way and that. Having the PCs make Agility Tests to avoid getting caught in the midst of panicked groups of serfs or avoid packs of Warp Zombies can add to the tension. Those failing the Tests become both slowed-down and separated from the others, or they suffer a Warp Zombie attack—they must defeat or disengage from the zombie before they can resume their escape.

Note that Baron Ulbrexis should not be killed at this point. For effect, if the baron is attacked by Warp Zombies, serfs fling themselves in front of the danger—sacrificing themselves so that the baron can escape.

Once the Acolytes and the baron arrive at the op-centre, allow for a pause in the battle as the party and the arbitrators regroup and wait for the inevitable attack. Use this time to allow the players to better understand their predicament; receiving reports from the arbitrators about zombies emerging from all around the Harrows and how the zombies all appear to be heading towards the op-centre. Let the suspense build as the Acolytes watch the approach of the first group of zombies and plan what they intend to do.

As the zombies reach the op-centre, the Acolytes can hear their inhuman screams and moaning, as they begin to claw their way into the roof of the op-centre. Suddenly zombies begin to fall through the roof, picking themselves off the floor to attack those within. Ideally run this scene as a series of small fights between the Acolytes, arbitrators and zombies. No matter where they turn or run to, Warp Zombies are literally coming through the walls!

At a suitable point, perhaps just as the Acolytes and arbitrators appear to have fended-off the initial zombie attack, Morirr and the surviving members of the Broken Chains turn up, leading to the third and final climatic scene.

Presumably the PCs will want to concentrate their attacks on the Broken Chains. Have the remaining arbitrators fend-off the next wave of Warp Zombies—perhaps one or two zombies break-through to "worry" any Acolyte who is having an "easy time" of it.

Use this time to build to the final climax. Just as the Acolytes realise what they have to do in order to kill Morirr, have the Warp Zombies assault en masse—far too many for the arbitrators to handle. Just as the Broken Chains and the Warp Zombies appear to have won, the Acolytes take that last swing or shot at Morirr...



III: BARON HOPES

EXPERIENCE

AWARDS

In addition to any Experience Point awards noted in the text, Acolytes that survive this adventure should receive 1000 xp each.

Acolytes who worked out where the Broken Chains would strike next, without having to be told, should be awarded 100 xp for each Acolyte involved.

If the whole group managed to keep Baron Ulbrexis's identity a secret until the attack on Hazael's Cross, they all receive an additional 100 xp each.

Acolytes that participate in the killing of either Throgel or Raze will receive an extra 200 xp for each one.

Finally, figuring out how to destroy Assod Morirr and doing the deed is worth another 250 xp.

Correspondingly, Morirr, and whoever is left of the Broken Chains, will attempt to personally hunt down Ulbrexis not long after the Warp Zombie epidemic commences. One of their first manoeuvres is to hit the Adeptus Arbites patrol vehicle with a krak missile, knocking it out of the sky before anyone can use it to escape the Harrow.

Wherever the Acolytes are, it probably isn't looking too good for them. Their best chance is to find relative safety in the Adeptus Arbites op-centre. Presuming that this is exactly what they do and that Baron Ulbrexis is still with them, the Warp Zombies begin converging from all sides of the Harrow, gradually making their way towards the op-centre—lured there by the baron's presence.

If they parted equitably with him, the mutant envoy, Olion will contact the Acolytes in the midst of an attack to state, via vox, that Morirr has apparently been ranting how, "*he has to kill Ulbrexis now*," and that, "*the blood line of Ulbrexis must end now*." Olion will inform the Acolytes that Morirr is on his way to (wherever) the Baron Ulbrexis is—presumably the op-centre.

The Adeptus Arbites op-centre is composed of plastel alloys and is very sturdy. The walls have an Armour Point value of 25.

The key to stopping the Warp Zombies is killing Morirr, which disrupts their presence in realspace, as he is the "pathway" through which they can exist here. However, the key to killing Morirr is the blood of Ulbrexis. Any attack that Ulbrexis makes on Morirr can wound him normally and a blade or bullet coated with Ulbrexis's blood can also wound Morirr—a fact that the terrorist is completely unaware of. Naturally, this would be an opportune time to have Ulbrexis suffer a wound by a Warp Zombie or be hit by a stray shot just as he puts a round through Morirr's leg, ensuring that there is no way he's going to be intact enough to personally deliver any killing blows. Acolytes who see Ulbrexis wound Morirr, may take a **Routine (+30) Intelligence Test** to comprehend that Ulbrexis can actually wound Morirr; with two or more degrees of success they also realise that Ulbrexis's blood can be "used" to wound Morirr.

With Ulbrexis wounded and fallen to the ground, Morirr taunts the Acolytes by saying, "*Send my regards to your master Eloeholth*." If the Acolytes still haven't figured it out, the wounded Ulbrexis can help by muttering, "*My blood wounds him... use it...*" before slipping into unconsciousness.

Morirr, with Ulbrexis unconscious on the floor, believes he is invincible and that none can now harm him. This over confidence

should prove his undoing. Whilst the remaining arbitrators take care of the rest of the Warp Zombies, the Acolytes can hopefully put an end to Morirr by coating their weapons and bullets with Ulbrexis's blood. Since the mutant terrorist believes he cannot be hurt, he makes no attempt to Dodge or Parry, therefore any attacks are likely to take him down.

As Morirr slumps to the floor of the op-centre, a deafening screech erupts from the Warp Zombies as they slump over as one, their connection to the warp cut with Morirr's death. The few remaining members of the Broken Chains try to flee, most probably easily captured now that their leader is no more.

AFTERMATH

With Morirr dead, the Warp Zombies defeated and the Broken Chains' plans in tatters, the Acolytes have won. As the Acolytes look over the resulting carnage, they will comprehend just how close Morirr came to unleashing complete devastation upon Serpheris Secundus.

The few days is spent picking up the pieces and (re) burying the dead. Messages come from Icenholm demanding an explanation for what has occurred within the Harrow. Without warning, Inquisitor Vaarak arrives ahead of schedule, eager to discover what has taken place.

He listens, stern-faced, to the Acolytes' verbal report. An uneasy silence falls upon the room as he considers what he has been told. After what seems an eternity, he scarred face breaks into a broad smile as he congratulates the Acolytes on their audacious survival and success in saving the Harrow from a grisly fate, which would surely have crippled not only the planet's tithe, but also would have had terrible consequences for the entire sector as well.

As for Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis, Vaarak orders the Acolytes to execute him, as his service to the Imperium has come to satisfactory conclusion. Despite Ulbrexis's help in defeating the terrorists, he is ultimately a condemned man.

With their mission completed, the Acolytes depart Serpheris Secundus with Inquisitor Vaarak.

Perhaps unknowingly, the Acolytes have heard the name of the Calixis Sector's master of the Serrated Query. What plans that cunning individual has for them, when word eventually reaches him of the Acolytes part in destroying his plans, is up to the GM...

NPCs

Here you will find the profiles for each of the prominent NPCs presented in this scenario.

BARON HAVALIR SAERTON ULBREXIS

Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
36	4I	32	34	3I	52	4I	4I	47

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 12

Skills: Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Common Lore (Administratum) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Scholastic Lore (Bureaucracy) (Int), Scholastic Lore (Heraldry) (Int), Scholastic Lore (Philosophy) (Int), Literacy (Int), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int), Medicae (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +10.

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Power, Primitive), Pistol Training (Las, SP), Air of Authority, Master Orator.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Knife (3m; 1d5+3 R; Primitive), compact laspistol (15; S/-/-; 1d10+1 E; Shots 15; Rld Full; Reliable).

Gear: Good quality clothing.

CAPTAIN KOBAL AIZDAR

Captain Kobal Aizdar Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	37	42	39	37	42	36	4I	43

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 14

Skills: Awareness (Per), Carouse (T), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Gamble (Int), Literacy (Int), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int), Trade (Merchant) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Drive (Ground Vehicle, Hover Vehicle) (Ag), Pilot (Spaceship) (Ag), Navigation (Stellar) (Int).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Power, Primitive), Pistol Training (Las, SP), Basic Weapon Training (Bolt, Las, SP), Peer (Imperial Navy), Iron Discipline, Swift Attack.

Armour: Xeno mesh (Arms 4, Body 4, Legs 4).

Weapons: Hand cannon (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Rld 2Full), power sword (1d10+9 E; Pen 6; Balanced, Power Field).

Gear: Captains uniform, 15 spare round for the hand cannon.

PROCTOR NOLES ROTLAN

Proctor Noles Rotlan Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
38	38	38	38	35	35	34	33	30

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 15

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Underworld) (Int), Interrogation (WP) +10, Scholastic Lore (Judgement) (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Bolt, SP), Disarm, Melee Weapon Training (Shock), Pistol Training (Bolt, SP), Takedown.

Armour: Enforcer light carapace (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5).

Weapons: Combat shotgun (30m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Rld Full; Scatter), hand cannon (35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Rld 2Full), shock maul (1d10+3 I; Shocking).

Gear: Micro-bead, photo visor, respirator, 2 combat shotgun magazines, combat shotgun magazine of man-stopper shells.

CAPTAIN MOVERN

Captain Movern Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
32	37	35	37	30	30	32	3I	27

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Skills: Awareness (Per), Climb (S), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Interrogation (WP), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag), Gamble (Per).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Las, SP, Primitive), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive, Chain), Pistol Training (SP), Takedown.

Armour: Scourge carapace (Arms 3, Body 4, Legs 3).

Weapons: Lasgun (100m; S/3/-; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 60; Rld Full, Reliable), chainsword (1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing).

Gear: Uniform, 2 charge packs.

OLION, MUTANT NEGOTIATOR

Olion, Mutant Negotiator Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
22	25	35	38	32	3I	39	25	20

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 13

Skills: Climb (S), Common Lore (Local) (Int), Common Lore (Imperial Creed) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Survival (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Traits: (Mutation) Extra Eyes (Olion gains a +10 to any Perception Tests, or Skills based on Perception (involving sight). In addition, he may re-roll any failed Tests to avoid Surprise.

Weapons: Club (1d10+3 I; Primitive).

Gear: Tattered clothing.

THE BROKEN CHAINS

ASSOD MORIRR, MUTANT CULTIST, LEADER OF THE BROKEN CHAINS

Assod Morirr Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
32	27	33	34	34	38	41	47	32

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 15

Skills: Awareness (Per), Ciphers (Occult), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +10, Forbidden Lore (Warp) (Int) +10, Secret Tongue (Cult) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (SP), Resistance (Psychic), Strong Minded, Unshakeable Faith.

Special: Dark Pact. Morirr can only be wounded and killed by Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis, or weapons (including bullets) soaked in the blood of Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis.

Armour: None.

Weapons: Knife (3m; 1d5+3 R; Primitive), stub automatic (30m; S/3/-; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 9; Rld Full).

Gear: Robes, stub auto clip.

THROGEL

Throgel Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
43	21	⁽⁸⁾ 47	43	25	23	31	24	19

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 18

Skills: Climb (S), Common Lore (Local) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Survival (Int).

Talents: Berserk Charge, Swift Attack, Furious Assault.

Traits: Natural Weapons (Fists), Fear 1 (Disturbing), (Mutation) Steel Skinned (Throgel has 6 Armour Points on all Locations—this protection is doubled against Energy attacks (i.e. AP 12), Unnatural Strength (×2).

Weapons: Fists (1d10+8 I; Primitive).

Gear: None.

RAZE

Raze Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
29	31	28	29	34	43	32	47	39

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 13

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Knowledge (Imperium) (Int), Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag), Invocation (WP) +10, Psyniscience (Per), Scrutiny (Per), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Survival (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Concealment (Ag).

Talents: Melee Weapon Training (Primitive), Pistol Training (Las, SP), Psy Rating 3.

Psychic Powers: (Minor) Call Item, Déjà vu, Dull Pain, Fearful Aura, Sense Presence, Unnatural Aim. (Pyromancy) Blinding Flash, Burning Fist, Call Flame, Fire Bolt.

Armour: Ganger leathers (Arms 1, Body 1, Legs 1).

Weapons: Laspistol (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Rld Full; Reliable), knife (3m; 1d5+2 R; Pen 0; Primitive).

Gear: Las pistol charge pack.

MUTANT TERRORISTS

Mutant Terrorists Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
32	27	36	36	22	22	30	25	20

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 12

Skills: Climb (S), Common Lore (Local) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Survival (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive, SP), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Traits: (Mutation) 50% chance to have 1d5–1 additional mutations, see page 334 in Dark Heresy for a full list of possible mutations).

Weapons: Poor quality autogun (90m; S/3/10; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 30; Rld Full; Unreliable), club (1d10+3 I; Primitive).

Gear: Tattered clothing.

BROKEN CHAINS MUTANT THUGS

Broken Chains Mutant Thugs Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
22	22	36	36	22	22	30	25	20

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 12

Skills: Climb (S), Common Lore (Local) (Int), Speak Language (Low Gothic) (Int), Survival (Int).

Talents: Basic Weapon Training (Primitive, SP), Melee Weapon Training (Primitive).

Traits: (Mutations) in addition to any cosmetic mutations

such as extra noses, small horns, feathers, etc., choose one or more of the following for each of the mutants:

Tough Hide: The mutant gains the Natural Armour 2 trait from dense skin and thick scar tissue.

Brute: The mutant is physically powerful, with deformed masses of slab-like muscle. Increase its Strength and Toughness Characteristics by 10 each.

Tox Blood: The mutant's system is saturated with toxic pollutants and poisonous chemicals. It gains a +20 bonus to Toughness Tests made to resist poison, but reduces its Toughness and Intelligence Characteristics by 1d10. Should the mutant's blood come into contact with a living creature, that creature must succeed on a Difficult (-10) Toughness Test or suffer 1d5 wounds.

Clawed/Fanged: The mutant gains razor claws, a fanged maw, barbed flesh or some other form of natural weapon. It gains the Natural Weapon trait (either I or R Damage).

Multiple Appendages: The mutant has sprouted additional functioning limbs in the shape of arms, tentacles or a prehensile tail (or tails). It gains the Ambidextrous and Two-Weapon Wielder talents, and a +10 bonus on Climb Tests and Grapple attacks.

See page 334 in Dark Heresy for a full list of other possible mutations.

Weapons: Poor quality autogun (90m; S/3/10; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 30; Rld Full), club (1d10+3 I; Primitive).

Gear: Tattered clothing.

WARP ZOMBIES

Warp Zombies Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
22	12	40	⁽⁸⁾ 40	12	18	12	10	—

Movement: 1/2/3/6

Wounds: 18

Skills: None.

Talents: Frenzy.

Traits: Unnatural Toughness (×2), From Beyond, Fear 2, Dark Sight, Natural Weapons (hands and teeth).

Armour: None

Weapons: Hand and teeth (1d10+4 I; Primitive).

Gear: Rotted and gore-soaked tatters.

Special Rule: Walking Dead

An animated corpse, propelled into life by dark forces is, as might be imagined, quite difficult to “kill”. These creatures do not need to breathe; they do not tire and are immune to poisons and diseases, as well as, many environmental hazards. They do not suffer the effects of being Stunned or penalties for being injured. In addition, only Critical Wounds suffered to the Head or Body can destroy them—any Damage suffered to an Arm or Leg simply renders that limb useless.



Ref: Inq/045678499/BI

Subject: Verbal Transcript of Pict-Recorded Document

Date: 791.M41

Location: Sepheris Secundus,

Ore Processing Complex HA96E (locally known as "the Harrow")

Sector: Calixis (Scintillan Sub)

Original Transcription: Savant Trokner, Ordo Hereticus, Tyrantine Cabal Holding, Bastion Serpents, 792.M41

Additional Notes: Savant Essar, Ordo Hereticus, 02.792.M41



++ Ignorance is a blessing not
to be disdained by the wise ++

++ EXTRACTED FROM MINE SHAFT SECURITY MONITOR STATION BY
ADEPTUS ARBITES OFFICER MERON TISE—ALL OTHER COPIES ELIMINATED. ++

>[RECORDING STARTS]

[Stationary Pict-source] Wide angle view of ore collection station. Ground laced with ore-cart tracks, several carts present. Industrial smelter visible in far corner of chamber. Three tunnel mouths visible, two dark, one lit by electric lamp.

Distant sound, indistinct—pict source shaken. [Explosion?] Repeating alarm claxon sounds. Warning lights engage in chamber.

[Image and sound remains same for 37 seconds]

Sounds of movement. Man [Subject I] in grey coveralls, enters chamber, panting with exertion, from second tunnel mouth. Clothing covered in large stains. [Blood?] Right hand holds industrial shears. Shears drip fluid over the floor. [Subject I] Turns and looks back up the tunnel from which he emerged, clearly expecting pursuit. [Subject I] Runs across chamber towards pict source—pict source begins tracking. A second man [Subject II] emerges from tunnel mouth. [Subject I] approaches pict source—positively identified as Ore Collector 5th Rank, Assod Morirr. [verified]

VOICE (II): How many did you kill? How many children?

[Subject II] wears grey coveralls, heavy-set; one hand holds a short, slightly curved blade designed for tunnel fighting.

VOICE (I) [MORIRR]: What does it matter? They'll breed more.

VOICE (II): Indistinct snarl of rage.

[Subject II] lunges across room, blade outstretched. His stroke is parried by [Subject I] [Morirr]. Claxon light illuminates [Subject II] for 4 seconds as he struggles with [Subject I] [Morirr]. [Subject II] positively identified as Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis**[verified]. [Subject I] [Morirr] and [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] engage in hand-to-hand combat. Pict source pulls back to capture both men circling about the room, weapons at the ready.

[Subject II] [Ulbrexis] lands several blows in rapid succession, [Subject I] [Morirr] shrugs them off, seemingly unaffected. [Subject I] [Morirr] deals savage wound to [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] side. Combatants circle, blood clearly spreading under [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] coveralls. [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] fall, impaling [Subject I] [Morirr] through torso as [Subject I] [Morirr] shears cut [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] right leg off below the knee. [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] collapses to the ground, blood spurting from his severed leg. [Subject I] [Morirr] begins laughing. [Subject I] [Morirr] picks up [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] with his free hand, pushing him against an ore cart and puts his blades on either side of [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] neck.

VOICE (I) [MORIRR]: Goodbye, Ulbrexis.

[Subject II] [Ulbrexis] punches his right hand into [Subject I] [Morirr] lower jaw. A pulse of purple light flares out the top of [Subject I] [Morirr] head as a blast of energy sears through his skull causing pict source to engage flare compensators [partial loss of picture for 3 seconds]. Suspect attack was delivered by device in [Subject II] [Ulbrexis] ring. [Subject I] [Morirr] face crumples inward and his body slumps to the ground.

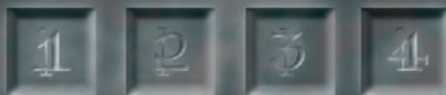
VOICE (II) [ULBREXIS]: Goodbye, Morirr.

[Subject II] [Ulbrexis] collapses to mine floor, falling alongside [Subject I] [Morirr] corpse.

>[RECORDING ENDS]

*Ore Collector 5th Rank Assod Morirr. Mutant terrorist affiliated with a group known as the Broken Chains. Wanted in connection with more than 50 cases of sabotage within the mine works of Sepheris Secundus. Mutant status discovered late in life, avoided summary execution by fleeing to deep mine area known as the Shatters. Presumed dead.

**The Heretic Baron of Sepheris Secundus. Baron Havalir Saerton Ulbrexis founded the Broken Chains circa 789.M41 in order to defy the authorities of Sepheris Secundus and advance his heretical democratic agenda. Captured by Adeptus Arbitres agents in 792.M41. Executed in 793.M41—see ++EXPURGED++





APPENDICES

APPENDIX I:
THE SERRATED QUERY

•

APPENDIX II:
THE FACELESS ONE

APPENDIX I: THE SERRATED QUERY

The Serrated Query appears to be a clandestine criminal organisation that exists solely for the purpose of making profit without thought to morality or conscience. The group actively promotes conflicts throughout the Imperium, making proceeds by selling information and resources to all sides involved in any given war. The Serrated Query also engages in smuggling, drug trafficking, slavery, extortion and the movement of xenos goods. In short, if there is gelt to be had, the Query is interested.

A SPECULATIVE HISTORY

Those that search after the Serrated Query's history do not find a lack of information, but rather an overabundance of conflicting stories ranging from the plausible to the completely outlandish. All stories agree that the group is very, very old with a history that stretches back further than most are prepared to believe. The Inquisition regards three different versions of the Serrated Query's history as being the most plausible:

The first account holds that the Serrated Query was founded not long after the Horus Heresy, in the turbulent times that followed the internment of the Emperor into the Golden Throne. Supposedly, the success of the Great Crusade grossly cut into the profits of a considerable number of criminal cartels throughout the galaxy. Realising that universal peace was not in their best interests, the various organisations formed an alliance in order to perpetuate uncertain times and steady revenue. The second version states that the Serrated Query was already in existence during the Great

Crusade, composed in the main of rebels that had ties with various xenos races and were opposed to the new order that the Emperor was imposing on the galaxy. Those that believe this version of the Query's history consider the fact that the group maintains connections with a wide variety of aliens as proof that this theory is correct, especially considering how reluctant the majority of xenos are to deal with human groups.

The last story is the one that most Inquisitors, to their regret, find to be the most plausible of all. This version holds that an Istvaanian, whose name has been lost, created the Serrated Query as a tool to foment rebellion throughout the Segmentum Solar in order to strengthen the Imperium. The Serrated Query took on a life of its own, growing far beyond the Istvaanian's ability to control. Or perhaps, that was the intention all along. Regardless, those that believe the third story regard the Serrated Query as the misbegotten child of the Inquisition.

THE SERRATED QUERY'S ORGANISATION

The Serrated Query typically operates in an extended cell fashion, with each group knowing only minimal amounts of knowledge about the others. A cell generally has between three dozen members that are actually a part of the Serrated Query. Any others found within such a cell are hired muscle, unaware of their employer's affiliations. Each cell makes profit in various illicit ways, passing information and a regular tithe to their unseen masters in another, older cell. In the way it conducts itself, the Serrated Query resembles a mercantile version of the Inquisition, an irony not lost on its more knowledgeable members and one of the reasons why many informed Inquisitors suspect the involvement of one of their own in its foundation.

The cells of the Serrated Query are far flung, stretching from the Segmentum Solar all the way to the edge of the Astronomican's reach within the Segmentum Obscurus. While the cell organisation prevents the group as a whole from being compromised, it also makes each individual faction vulnerable once exposed. This is acceptable to the higher echelons of the group for it acts as a sort of natural selection for the whole: clever cells subtly expand and thrive; foolish ones overextend, exposing themselves to Imperial scrutiny and swift destruction.

The Serrated Query is not a cult, nor affiliated with the Ruinous Powers, though individual cells may have members who believe it to be such, or who venerate the forces of Chaos. The upper levels of the Serrated Query seem to regard Chaos worship as bad for business as it almost always attracts the wrong sort of attention to their activities. Faith in the Chaos Gods is thus allowed, but somewhat discouraged. Their superiors swiftly scourge individual cells that have become “corrupted” and thrown their lot in with the Ruinous Powers. Their former brethren often destroy well-hidden cells in quick, brutal assaults. Others are eliminated by the Imperium as the Serrated Query tips off the Adeptus Arbites or the Inquisition to their existence, allowing their foes to do their dirty work for them.

THE SERRATED QUERY'S BELIEFS

The Serrated Query tends to engender a great deal of loyalty within its ranks in much the same way that various cults and the Inquisition do: by telling them certain “truths” that the Imperium has hidden from them. Serrated Query members are given access to a wide variety of data-storage units and exposed to a great deal of knowledge about the galaxy around them, though much of it is slanted by the Query's point of view.

The Serrated Query starts by telling its newest recruits that the Emperor is merely a powerful psyker, not a god. After showing the new member various proofs of that revelation, the superstitions that the Imperium works so hard to instill become stripped away one at a time. Query members are allowed and encouraged to experiment with various tech devices, while specifically being told that they are not to in any way “appease the machine spirit” of the device as there is no such thing. They are told of the existence of Chaos and Daemons, but such are described as “powerful extra dimensional xenos” or by various other monikers. Eventually, they'll be introduced to a xenos ally and shown that not all aliens are immediately bloodthirsty. Successfully indoctrinated members

of the Serrated Query are thus cosmopolitan and somewhat condescending in their outlook to those outside their ranks, believing those loyal to the Imperium to be deluded fools. They tend to be cynical heretics, believing that profit to be made in the here and now are far more useful than any spurious hope of future salvation after death.

Members of the Serrated Query are thus knowledgeable and dangerous opponents with access to a great deal of proscribed information, capable of jury-rigging tech without qualms, and willing to employ xenos devices with little hesitation. They count mutants, psykers, xenos and even Chaos cultists among their ranks, yet none of these groups actually define who they are. They are a dangerously amorphous group with an uncertain agenda. In short, they are a perfect foe for Acolytes of the Inquisition.

THE SERRATED QUERY AND THE CALIXIS SECTOR

The Calixian Conclave has long been aware of the existence of the Serrated Query within their sector, though there is little they can do about it other than root out one cell at a time as they come to light. Many believe that various cells of the Query in fact serve members of the Inquisition in one capacity or another. Several members of the Tyrintine Cabal, however, have far darker suspicions about the activities of the Serrated Query within Calixis. They believe that the shadowy being known as Eloeholth the Faceless either created or suborned the Serrated Query within Calixis as an extended information-gathering tool in order to further its agenda—an agenda somehow tied to the Tyrant Star. None knows Eloeholth's whole history, though there are a few who suspect parts of it—then again, like the Query itself, the Faceless seems to have a long history shrouded with lies. The Inquisition deduced the connection, though, because the Serrated Query within the Calixis Sector almost exclusively uses the symbol of the “question mark that cuts” as their own—a symbol also associated with the Faceless One.

RUNNING THE SERRATED QUERY

The most dangerous aspect of the Serrated Query is a subtle one: its members' mindsets. In a galaxy dominated by the enforced feudal ignorance of the Imperium, the Serrated Query is a group of criminally minded, atheistic, cynical free-thinkers. They are thus far closer in outlook to those of us belonging to the 3rd Millennium than the majority of the Imperium in their time.



APPENDIX II:
THE FACELESS ONE

To: **Lord Inquisitor Caidin, Ordo Hereticus**

From: **Interrogator Felspar, Hazeroth Abyss**

Subject: **The Quest**

Priority: **Priority Review** – READ IMMEDIATELY

Received: **847.M41**

Message Format: Couriered—Rogue Trader Captain Koarg Folson, Master of the Void Dancer

I know his name, my Lord.

Fifteen years it has been since you sent me on this mission. Fifteen long years of searching the shadows of more worlds than I can readily count. I am weary in body and spirit, my mind resonates with xenos songs, and I am uncertain if what I tell you now is at last the truth or one more elaborate lie. Let it be truth. Dear God-Emperor, but it feels like truth.

My last communiqué, as I recall, was sent some three sidereal years ago. At the time, I had recently uncovered a cult dedicated to the Dark Powers on Haethros as I searched for more of the precious internally lit Waystones. It took close to a year, but you'll be pleased to know that the Sibilant Rush is no more. Of more import, though, is the fact that I extracted some twelve viable stones from their inner chambers. The Waystones were placed within a series of runic configurations wired to some blasphemous device. Some had already been used, their eldritch light extinguished. Whatever vile rite the rest were intended for, I claimed them before they were used up.

With the twelve from Haethros, my count of lit Waystones stood at an even hundred. Reasoning that I had finally collected enough, I travelled to Kharon's Wheel, a free port located in the wild space to the galactic northeast of the Orsobol system. There, I hoped to meet up with the band of Eldar rangers I mentioned to you previously. I was in luck for Oyrandar and his fellows were indeed present. I don't think they expected to see me alive; Oyrandar showed what I believe passes for surprise upon an Eldar's countenance when I sat down next to him. His surprise turned to obvious shock when I stated, "I have them."

He motioned to his fellows and they fell silent. "How many?" I told him that I had struggled for and at last acquired a hundred stones since our meeting twelve years previous. "One hundred? You have fought for and won a hundred carrecenad?" I nodded. Several of his fellows stiffened and one openly gasped (the youngest I thought, it's difficult to tell with the Eldar). "What do you wish of me?" he asked quietly. "Guide me to the oracle you spoke of, the seer you said could help me on my quest. I will freely give the stones for his vision." Oyrandar studied me for a time, and then nodded, as if to himself. "So be it. This path is ended, another begins. I will take you to the Farseer Istillaur." I looked about at his astonished fellows and back to the ranger. "Will it be enough?" Oyrandar's return gaze showed more emotion than I have ever seen from an Eldar. "I don't know, human. But if it is not, then there is nothing in this universe that you could do which would be."

We travelled together for the next eight months, Oyranar and I. Our journey deserves more space than this letter affords, for it is a tale worth the hearing. Not once did Oyranar attempt to take the Waystones from me, though at first I had suspected he might. After one particularly harrowing incident in which he saved my life, I asked him why he hadn't let me die and taken the stones for himself. He shook his head and replied, "They are your burden, as you are mine." At the end of our journey together we came to a planet listed on no Imperial map and stepped through a portal designed by the Eldar to traverse the very warp itself.

I do not know where we were transported to, though some comments my host made later led me to suspect it was called Varantha. When we arrived, armed guards were already waiting for us. I was blindfolded and led for a time through the Eldar city-ship. My sight was restored in what looked to be a small garden filled with crystalline blooms. Before me stood an ancient Eldar, the oldest I've ever seen, wearing a dark purple robe covered in the runic symbols of their race. At his side stood Oyranar. About us stood a variety of Eldar in differing robes, several of which resembled those of the elders' but less elaborate.

"Before you were born, I knew this day could come. Yet seeing the possibility of a wonder does not always prepare one for its reality when it comes to pass. Hail Dyantar Mara-Kaedan!" The ancient xeno spoke in perfectly fluent Gothic and all the others present repeated his final words. "Hail Dyantar Mara-Kaedan!" He stepped closer to me. "Oyranar has told me what you seek, but the name of the Ish-aith is not mine to give; however, I know those who bear that knowledge. If this were any other day, if you were any other man, I would tell you they are impossible to find, yet there are no coincidences. They are here now. They are assembled within the court beyond this garden. I cannot guarantee that they will answer your query, human, but I, Istillaur Anguarineth, will add my name to yours in the request. Will you accept this?" Realising that this was likely my best chance, I nodded. Oyranar immediately looked relieved and I suspected I'd narrowly averted a potential catastrophe by refusing the old seer's help. I took the worn leather bags that held the Waystones from my pack and presented them to the xenos seer. The Eldar all about us edged closer as the elder opened one of the bags and drew a single shining stone from within. He held it with a tight grasp and closed his eyes, murmuring softly as he did so. A few moments later, his eyes flew open and he studied me again, as if for the first time. "You fought a Daemon to reclaim this stone." It was not a question, but I answered anyway. "Yes." The Eldar about us looked shocked, but he simply nodded. "Truly I named you this day, Dyantar Mara-Kaedan—Guarder of a Hundred Souls." I had nothing to say to that.

The old seer laid a hand upon my shoulder and gestured for me to walk with him. Oyranar looked as if he was uncertain whether he should follow or not. The seer spoke to him as we passed by saying, "Your burden passes to me. We will speak later." Oyranar caught my eye and gave me the slightest of bows as the Eldar seer led me away from the garden. We passed through a pair of incredibly detailed stained glass doors depicting an ornately armoured Eldar warrior grappling with a many-tentacled beast. "Asurmen," the seer whispered as we passed through the portal. The vaulted chamber beyond held a series of odd sculptures crafted from the bone-like material that the Eldar favour. At the centre of the room, on a slightly raised dais, stood a group of the most brightly garbed Eldar I've ever seen. Each one was a riot of shifting colours, with complex patterns that

defy easy description and all had masks of one sort or another.

The seer led me onto the dais and motioned for me to stand at his side before turning to address the gaily-attired Eldar. "Dancers of the Laughing God, I Farseer Istillaür Anguarineth, greet you and bid you welcome. Here beside me stands Dyantar Mara-Kaedan. Long has he quested, by the measure of his people, for a name. He seeks to know the identity of the Ish-aith. I ask that you help him." A figure clad black and silver wearing the mask of a grinning skull emerged from the mass of his fellows to regard us. His voice was like the tolling of a leaden bell. "We have heard of you Anguarineth, and this one we have heard whispers of. Tell us mon-keigh; tell us how a full hundred carrecenad came to be within your grasp. Did you fight for them all?" For a brief instant, I thought to lie to them, but instinct told me that only the truth would serve. "No. I fought for some, but others I purchased, or swindled from others. I won several in a card game." The grimly clad figure barked a short laugh. He tilted his rictus grin to regard me sidelong. "What you seek is the Lament of Dethardin, it is a masque we perform... seldom."

The tallest of the figures, an Eldar wearing a widely grinning mask crested by a shock of scintillant prismatic polymer strands moulded to resemble hair, stepped forward. Though his face was covered behind the smirking mask I knew he was studying me. He leaned forward and his voice was like the rumblings of distant war engines. "You have earned this performance, Dyantar Mara-Kaedan, but the works of the Eldar are not for your kind. There are songs that... linger. You have done our people a great service, human, worthy of praise, I would not see you harmed for it. Are you certain that you wish to know the true identity of the Ish-aith?" I nodded. "So be it." He turned to the figures behind him. "Is your successor ready Shadoweaver?" A man wearing a featureless chrome mask nodded, "Aye, Great Harlequin." The grinning masked Great Harlequin looked back to us. "Tonight we perform the Lament of Dethardin, a masque we perform but once in a generation... I hope that within it, you find what you seek Dyantar Mara-Kaedan."

The next few hours were spent in preparation by the troupe while the Farseer and I dined. Anguarineth told me that the players were travelling folk known as Harlequins, a fact I'd deduced on my own, but would say little else on the subject. I asked if they knew the name I sought, why they didn't just tell me? I think you will find his answer of interest: "What you seek has been bound to shadows and veiled for long years even by the reckoning of the Eldar. Names have power, my young friend. The name you seek has reason to stay hidden and the power to do so. Were they to simply tell you the name of your adversary, it may very well slip from your mind minutes later. The masques of the Laughing God, however, are not so easily forgotten..." He faltered when he said the last; I think I know why, now.

As the performance drew near, the theatre filled with Eldar young and old. The Farseer and I were afforded a place in honour in the centre of the hall, with no small amount of curious glances directed at me. The masque began with a simple tune echoing throughout the hall, following the motions of a single figure that came leaping across the stage. The figure was a young and impatient Eldar named Dethardin, eager to experience all the universe had to offer, soon joined by other far more conservative fellows who moved to stately dances, ignoring the youth's wild leaping. The youngster forever delves the

shadows, continually testing the limits of his elders' patience. The years flow by, the music grows in complexity and the frustrated young Eldar leaves the safety of his home to join a troupe of Harlequins, leaving his name behind in the process. This causes a start in the audience; murmurs swell and I realise this story is indeed rare for many in the hall have not heard of it. The young Eldar, now an accomplished Harlequin, continues to search the shadows, still seeking for truths perhaps best left unknown. A triumphant movement of the orchestra is tempered with a sombre melody from an unseen chorus as the dancer earns the right to don a featureless chrome mask, symbol of his new rank within the troupe. The dance grows in complexity once again as the blank-masked hero continuously shines lights into the shadows that surround the troupe, till one day, the shadows shine a light back. A figure emerges from the darkness cloaked in inky black, an outline devoid of features or solid form. A single long finger beckons to the hero and the Harlequin joins the newcomer in a martial dance. Wondrous and terrifying, the music changes again as they struggle across the entire stage and I find that tears are running steadily down my face. A challenge of lives, sorcery, fate and prophecy—the dark figure and the blank-masked Harlequin struggle, with the rest of the troupe playing out dozens of small stories representative of their conflict about the stage.

The music crescendos, the Harlequin seer falls. The dark figure pounces upon him, tearing forth his shimmering faceless mask, claiming it for his own—the audience screams and moans as one. The dark one's guard slackens, his caution gone in the midst of his triumph. He raises his prize and the dying Dethardin, his name reclaimed, lashes out in his death throes and seizes his foe's name in exchange for his own face...

Eloeholth. Eloeholth the Faceless, Sorcerer of Chaos. The hall screams with the wrath of it and I feel the shadow of the warp pass over me. Dethardin slumps dead to the floor and I realise the truth of this performance, for the one called Shadowweaver is truly dead. The Harlequin lies prostrate on the stage floor and I know that he shall never rise again for the masque and my request has killed him.

It has been close to half a year since I saw the Lament of Dethardin, but the song still lingers my Lord.

You have your enemy's name. Use it well.

Felspar

Post Note: Interrogator Felspar was interred in a small asylum upon Scintilla in 848.M41. He continuously hummed a tune of unknown, presumably xenos origin and had become incapable of any other meaningful interaction. Two of his nurses went insane while tending him, one attempting to bore out her ear canal with an industrial awl. Thereafter, his only attendants were servitors lacking auditory equipment until his death in 878.M41.



IMPERIUM DATA SLATE Model. 75.RT-E1.41K



++ Ignorance is a blessing not
to be disdained by the wise ++

To: Lord Inquisitor Caidin

Carried by: Guild Astropathica (Scintilla) via meme-wave 97~d.642 triple intra

Path detail:

Origin: Ryza, Aurus Sub—AM Forge World origin date: 2.836.813.M41

(Relayed: direct Gathalamor—Colcha—Hydraphur)

Received: Xiao, Golgenna Sub 7906 reception date: 534.814.M41

Transcript personally delivered by Senior Astropath Xiao—all copies erased.

Author: Grand Archivist Etibulus Mortarn, Archmagos Lexicanus, Keeper of the Vault Dissembling.

In the name of the Omnisiah I greet you, Lord Inquisitor.

Your unusual request has sent us down many a path, Caidin. It has been a long time indeed since such a challenge has been laid before the brethren of the Vaults. A name of antiquity, lost in darkness. Seven years, nine months, three weeks, four days, thirty-seven hours, twelve minutes and sixteen seconds after we accepted your charge, this answer we return:

By chance and folly we discovered what you sought, guided by the Machine God. A young Archivist who knew no better, frustrated in the search, opened up a hold locked with the Eightfold Seal and searched in sinister datacrypts unwhispered of to lesser learners. He once had promise, but now his mind is shattered, lost in darkness forever—but his sacrifice brought forth what you sought.

Prospero, Caidin, the name comes from dead Prospero and such a name it is: Eloeholth was the personal name of the Master Architect Palidius the Silversmith, oftimes called the Star Forger. Greatest designer from a world known for its legendary architects, he was supposedly a tutor of the Red Cyclops himself.

Only a single badly fragmented tale could we uncover, the rest was lost to data corruption:

...And sat he, Cyclopean Magnus... of the Star Forger,
acquainted in runes and the space outside,
breaker of angles...crafter of crystalline dreams, vast his vision,
sweeping his song...

...
...teachers Magnus had many, surpass them all save one, did the Cyclops:
Eloeholth Palidius, Silversmith of Prospero, sweeping his song...

...
[A large section is missing here, Caidin. — Mortarn]

...
...Came the Wolves that Lope between stars... betrayal was the
Cyclopean Magnus's charge, yet farther did the... vision stretch...
...ter's feet his vision rested not... one arch... the designs of another.
...Palidius looked... face of the deep...saw the Changer of...grinning
back at...Vengeance then...spite unmitigated by time's petty lash...duel...
decided...so would the Forger of Stars enact his revenge.

There is nothing else that we can do for you. I shall erase you and your request from my databanks, but first I shall pray for you.

May the God-Emperor shadow your footsteps in the dark places where you and yours must walk,

Lord Inquisitor.

Mortarn, Archmagos





++ Excuses are the refuge
of the weak ++

To: Lord Inquisitor Zerbe, Ordo Hereticus
From: Witch Finder Rykehuss
Subject: Maedros 7 Purge Revelations
Priority: **MODERATE**

Message Format: Couriered—Chartist Captain Elsrick Turpine, Master of the Loyal Signal.

Rejoice Lord Zerbe and give thanks to the Emperor for a great foe of the Imperium's has been laid low! My pogroms amidst the deviants of Maedros lead me to a group dedicated to overthrowing the local planetary governor. It was not the deluded rebels that interested me, however, but the deviants that were supplying them arms: members of the criminal organisation known as the Serrated Query.

After interrogating one of their operatives, a trying procedure as he was highly resilient and well trained in resisting our methods, I found out that no less a person than the Faceless One himself, leader of their heretical cult, was to be present at one of their local facilities within two days. Gathering my loyal band about me, I waited for word from my operatives that the Faceless One was indeed present. When his presence was confirmed, I assaulted the reinforced warehouse that the Serrated Query had chosen as a base. The fight was a dangerous affair, even for those as experienced as my chosen acolytes and myself; I suffered several losses amidst my staff and was terribly wounded. A full report is attached to this missive should you wish for further details of the engagement. In the end though, the Serrated Query was annihilated to the last—I personally cut the head off their leader. The so-called Faceless One wore a featureless mask and fought with great ingenuity, but the righteous cannot be put off with trickery and in the end, I had the mastery. The Faceless One is no more.

The Emperor Protects,

Rykehuss

To: Lord Inquisitor Caidin, Ordo Hereticus & Lord Inquisitor Zerbe, Ordo Hereticus
From: Inquisitor Vornus Kaede
Subject: Misplaced Optimism
Priority: **HIGH**
Message Format: Couriered—Chartist Captain Kobal Aizdar, Master of the Pax Behemoth.

My Lords,

The Witch Finder continues to be an over-zealous idiot, which should come as scant surprise. I do not question his courage and I do complement his valiant efforts on Maedros; however, I am aware of at least three other "Faceless Ones" operating in various portions of the Calixis Sector, only one of which appears to be involved with the Serrated Query. As I recall, my Lord Caidin, did you not once slay a "Faceless One" yourself? It is an identity easily adopted but readily useful, hence its popularity amidst our many foes.

I sincerely doubt that the being we know as Eloeholth the Faceless will be brought to heel by mere accident. Our archives and the information you have both entrusted me with have led me to believe that he (technically "it" as its gender remains uncertain) has operated in and around the Calixis Sector for at least a millennia, continually concealing his movements. Once again I feel compelled to note the many links to the Adranti that we have uncovered in relation to Eloeholth. The recent upsurge of his activity has in the main consisted of the systematic elimination of anyone that could reveal his present plans, e.g. diviners and other gifted psykers. This, of course, concerns me greatly—as I'm certain it does my lords.

The lies double back upon themselves. Is he Adranti? Is he a sorcerer of Chaos? Does he even exist at all? If the Faceless One, leader of the Serrated Query, is in truth Eloeholth Palidius, the Silversmith of Prospero, then I state without hesitation that he is far more dangerous than any of us could easily comprehend. My imagination runs wild at the thought that he may be behind the Tyrant Star... But then again, that may be just what the lying, deviant scoundrel wants us to think.

I remain your devoted servant,

Inquisitor Vornus Kaede